

shouted, and clamoured for arms to assail the Turks where-withal. Now they are left to the tender mercies of the Circassians and Bashî-Bazouks.

Now to speak of this side the Balkans. The paralysis brought about by the Plevna reverse still endures. The Russian attitude for the time is perfectly passive till the reinforcements arrive. Seven fresh divisions, not formed into army corps, are now on the march. Some are still in Russia, others are pressing on through Roumania. One hundred thousand men more are wanted, and are forthcoming, but they will have to be waited for. The first brigade of reinforcements is expected to cross the Danube in a few days. It is hoped that once the tide sets in a brigade will cross daily. The offensive will, no doubt, be recommenced before all the reinforcements are to hand. But a large proportion of them are indispensable for a renewed offensive. Plevna must fall, and Osman Pacha must be struck with a decisive blow. At present he can be only watched with intent to hinder further intrusion.

The Grand Duke Nicholas is in Bulgarem, in rear of the intrenched positions of Schahofskoy and Krüdener, confronting Plevna. Part of Mirsky's division stands between Turnova and Loftcha to hinder a Turkish advance in the direction of the former important centre. Thus are stopped the gaps through which was threatened the right flank of the Russian communications, and the defensive protection is probably sufficient, but the means are utterly inadequate for a renewed offensive. It is estimated that now from sixty to seventy thousand Turks stand on the Loftcha-Plevna line, and they will take a deal of beating.

On the left flank equally a strictly defensive attitude is enforced by circumstances. There are available for holding the line from the Danube to the Balkans on this flank the two corps constituting the army of the Czarewitch, and the 1st Division of the 11th Corps, left behind by Schahofskoy when he marched on Plevna, in all about 60,000 men, necessarily attenuated over a long front, so as to leave no gap for the Turks to creep through.

The Turks are probably of about the same strength, but theirs is the advantage of choosing where to strike if they care to strike at all. Mehemet Ali Pacha may concentrate at Rustchuk or Rissgrad or Osman Bazar. The Russians must be ready to face him everywhere. They dare not take the offensive and leave tracts of unguarded flank. They are not strong enough to guard a continuous flank and take the offensive as well. There remains for them only the

rôle of the strict defensive. The investment of Rustchuk must wait. The troops designed for that duty are needed elsewhere. The siege cannon are not ready if the troops were available. The River Lom still virtually constitutes the line of the Rustchuk Army, but the headquarters of the 12th Corps have been moved beyond it, from Trestenik to Kadikoi. The headquarters of the Czarewitch, with the 13th Corps about them, have advanced from Obertenik to Kaceljevo, thus confronting Rasgrad, while between Osman Bazar and Tirnova the 11th Division stands with its headquarters in Kosarevac. Zimmerman is where he was, no further south than Trajan's Wall. It is stalemate with him. He is guarding the Dobrudscha against an enemy who does not threaten it. He cannot push forward with his thirty thousand men lest enemies from Varna and Shumla should converge upon him. The Russian army begins to suffer in health owing in some corps to irregular rations, in others to hard marching, in all to heat; but the greatest predisposing cause is the total neglect of all sanitary precautions. They never bury dead horses or oxen, or the entrails of slaughtered cattle. They never dream seemingly of the wisdom of the latrine system. The result is a general tainting of the air, which poisons men predisposed to fall ill by reason of lassitude from over-fatigue or long abstinence from food, although men in stalwart health escape. Strangely enough, the greatest proportion of illness has manifested itself in the personnel of the Imperial suite, whose members are comparatively nursed in the downy lap of ease and fare sumptuously every day. General Ignatieff for three days was dangerously ill from a species of gastric fever, and is still confined to his room. Prince Galatzin has been equally ill from the same disorder, and is still in bed. The Emperor has five high officers known as general-adjutants on personal service about him. Of these but one is now fit for duty; the other four are ill. Nearly everybody is more or less sick, squeamish, and out of sorts. The reason is not far to seek. When I first came to Bjela it was fresh and sweet; now it has more stinks than Cologne, and the slums of Strasburg are a nosegay to it. The air is tainted thick and heavy with filth and rotting offal. Even tobacco smoke and brandy are powerless to avert nausea.

* SISTOVA, *August 10th.*—The official return of the loss at Plevna is 1,000 killed and about 4,500 wounded. The severity of the first estimate is mitigated by the coming in of individual stragglers days after the battle. It must, however, be impossible to distinguish between the killed, wounded,

and missing of such a battle, where the field remained with the enemy, and it is wiser to put the total loss at five thousand five hundred, if the official returns are to be relied on. It may be remembered that my estimate on the evening of the battle was between six and seven thousand. This was lower considerably than that of the Russians themselves, while German eye-witnesses have called it ten to eleven thousand.

The first brigade of the reinforcements is a splendid rifle brigade of four battalions. It is now at Simnitza, and will cross to-morrow. Its destination is the Plevna front. The resolution has been at last definitely taken to bridge the Danube at Pargos also.

Between the bridge head and Sistoia the correspondent of the Agence a Russian soldier,
 who fell mouth with sand,
 and attempted to rob him. He was rescued by four marines, who apprehended the soldier. The correspondent is lying in the hospital at Simnitza. The soldier was punctually shot here at noon to-day. This is an isolated case of ruffianism which might occur anywhere, day or night. I have journeyed alone and unarmed among the Russian soldiers, and so far from being injured and insulted have always experienced courtesy. I do not attribute this to the fact that I am a full-sized kind of man, but to the innate docility and acquired discipline of the Russian soldier, and a single instance of ruffianism must not be allowed to tell against him.

* *SISTOIA, August 10th* —I keep asking myself the question whether it is well or ill for the Russians that the Turks on their flanks in Bulgaria remain so fixedly in their intrenched positions instead of playing the bold and strong game of the offensive. I confess I find myself unable to answer with any degree of confidence the question which I thus put to myself. That it was well for the Russians that Osman Pacha did not take the offensive immediately after the battle of Plevna I can unhesitatingly affirm. Probably he did not lose heavily in that combat, stubborn and hard-fought as it was, and I can scarcely suppose there was much, in an abstract military sense, to prevent him from moving forward on say the 1st of August —the day on which the Russians, having pulled themselves somewhat together after the first crushing shock of the reverse, had been countermanded by their leaders from the half-effected retreat on the line of the Osma, had recovered some cohesion in the positions they had occupied previous to advancing to the attack, and were engaged in

adding by intrenchments to the strength of their foothold there.

That, although the attitude was not a cheerful one, the stout soldiers of Schahofskoy and Krüdener would have fought a hard fight, had Osman Pacha assailed them on that day, I make no doubt. The Russian soldier, so far as I have seen, may be relied upon to make a good fight of it whenever he is asked. But I cannot convince myself that, shaken by previous reverse, attenuated in strength by the losses incurred therein, and with their original great numerical inferiority, the Russian troops would have been able to hold their ground on the Trestenik-Poradim front against a determined attack made on a broad front by the whole force of Osman Pacha. Had they been broken by that attack, no practical soldier will deny that the recovery of Nicopolis would scarcely have been difficult for the Turkish general, and that there could have been not very much to prevent his grasp closing on the very neck of the Russian communications—the bridge at Sistova—if he had pursued his advantage with energy and promptitude. Between the line formed by Schahofskoy's and Krüdener's men and the bridge-head under the knoll below Sistova, there stood not a single Russian battalion.

Once beaten and broken in the Poradim-Trestenik position, it would have been impossible for the Russian troops to have so pulled themselves together as to make a stand on the line of the Osma against a renewed attack followed up briskly; it would have been exceptional good fortune and a highly creditable exploit could they have so retarded the Turkish advance as to have given time for the Russian army of Rustchuk to move from its positions on the Lom, and fall back on Sistova in time either to interpose between Osman Pacha and the bridge, or so to threaten his flank by their approach as to make him arrest his progress out of consideration for his own safety. Regarding all these things—and they must be regarded, for it is the acme of rash folly to contend that all military rules and cautions may be thrown to the wind, because of a foregone conclusion that the Turks will never take the offensive—I say then that there can be no sort of doubt it was eminently well for the Russians that Osman Pacha contented himself with despatching to Constantinople hyperbolical telegrams respecting his success, instead of following up that success by a swift and determined advance.

But this is no answer to my self-put and self-unanswered question, whether it is well or ill for the Russians that the Turks are still continuing passive in their positions. That these are too strong to be assailed the Russians confess by the maintenance

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on their part of a passive attitude pending the arrival of reinforcements. It is not that the ardour for the fray is quenched in them. On the contrary, they would desire nothing better than a pitched battle on each flank, if only a pitched battle could be compassed. They are confident of beating their enemy in the open field. But when that enemy firmly and respectfully declines to come out into the open, the affair assumes another aspect. If the Russians under these circumstances were to take the offensive, they would be fighting against soldiers and earthworks as well, and the task with their present strength is simply too much for them. So they are waiting while every nerve is being strained to hurry up reinforcements. The flower of the Russian army, the Guard Corps, is on the way, and Roumania is experiencing another inundation. I do not for a moment question the ability of a Russian army, even if of considerably inferior strength, to conquer a Turkish army in a battle fought out fairly in the open. Such a trial of strength I apprehend, would be great luck for the Russians. But how unlikely is it to befall them! How impossible, rather, while standing on the defensive along a line long drawn out! The axiom that a chain is no stronger than its weakest link is true also of an army in the position I describe. Convergence is almost impracticable—wholly so, if the attacking force should strike promptly, strongly, and without affording previous indications of its intention.

And then comes the question whether the Turks are acting wisely by standing still as they are doing on what may be called the menacing defensive, instead of trying actively to improve the opportunities which undoubtedly lie open to them. No doubt they would risk much by becoming the assailants. They must know themselves better than we know them, and it may be the outcome of that knowledge that keeps them stationary in their positions with spades as well as swords in their hands. Were they to take the offensive and succeed, great indeed would be their success. We should all say then that the game had been worth the candle. But were they to be defeated, great indeed would be the defeat and its consequences, and the world, following its time-honoured practice, would call them rash fools who had thrown away the splendid chances which Fabian tactics offered.

Well it is certain that so far the Fabian tactics have prospered not a little. There can be little doubt that when the seven divisions now on the way to reinforce the Russian armies arrive the

comes for going into winter quarters, Rustchuk ought almost certainly to have fallen, and probably Silistria and Widdin also; there would then remain only Shumla as a Turkish foothold on this side of the Balkans. But this is the full measure of the Russian expectations now, and they have to face the terrible difficulty and cost of wintering on this side the Balkans, and of renewing the campaign in the spring. They have to take note of any number of series of contingencies apart from inevitable difficulties and expenses. Pestilence may break out among their dense masses. Political complications may interfere to hamper military dispositions. There are strong indications that the war may become unpopular in Russia. In the army already nostalgia is becoming a power. Probably few of your readers have so much as attempted to realize how terribly severe must be the strain on the resources of Russia, of her armies wintering on and across the Danube. We know something of a strain of a similar character, although our army in the Crimea was a handful compared with the Russian hosts, and we could land supplies within a few miles of its front. The army will have to be housed—it cannot abide in tents during the inclemency of a Bulgarian winter. Now, in Bulgaria the villages are few and far between; they afford the scantiest accommodation. Wood is so scarce that none is available for hutting purposes; it will not even suffice for furnishing fuel for cooking, let alone for warmth.

The crops in Bulgaria have this year been good, but much of the grain has been left unreaped on the fields, and probably on an average not above half a harvest has been garnered. Including flocks and herds, Bulgaria probably is not equal to the task of furnishing more than a month's subsistence for the Russian armies. Roumania cannot wholly supply the deficiency. The Danube is no longer a high road. The roads through the Carpathians from Transylvania and the Bukovina are impassable in winter. There must be long periods of broken weather, when communications all over the country, from the Russian base up to the army, will be wholly impracticable. If the winter is an open one, as was last winter, the Danube will not be wholly frozen over, so as to admit of traffic on the ice, while the floating ice will necessitate the removal of the bridges. The cost of maintaining for five months 300,000 men at a distance of several hundred miles from their base in Russia might well give infinite concern to the richest country in the world.

* SISTOVA, *August 13th*.—Two days of continual rain have so cut up the roads in Roumania as for the time almost wholly

to arrest communications and stop the march of the troops between Alexandria and Simnitsa. The country is one huge morass and the road a Slough of Despond. Therefore the reinforcements needed for a renewed attack on Plevna are greatly retarded on the march. One division crossed some days ago. Three regiments of cavalry passed yesterday. A regiment of the 2nd Division is crossing to day, the rest of the division being in the Roumanian mud behind. The Grand Duke Nicholas sent an officer yesterday to Simnitsa from the headquarters in Studen to order the reinforcements on reaching the Danube to be pushed forward on Plevna with all possible speed directing that only half a day's halt should be allowed at Simnitsa before crossing the river.

The weather has now again become rather more settled, but the rain has injured an immense quantity of stores left unprotected. I have seen a huge heap of bread sodden into mouldy pulp and utterly useless save to feed pigs. Some days must to all appearance elapse before you need expect any important tidings from the Plevna direction. Considerable numbers of Turkish prisoners have been crossing the Danube into Roumania during the last few days chiefly sent down from about Tirnova where there had been an accumulation of them.

The Grand Duke's headquarters remain at Gorny Studen about twenty kilometres from Sistova where he has been joined by the Emperor and the Imperial headquarters from Bjela Studen is a mere village affording the scantiest accommodation. I understand that for the future it is intended that the Army and the Imperial headquarters shall remain united which seems to imply that the Emperor will encourage his soldiers by actual presence on the battle field.

* *SISTOVA August 16th* —I am a prisoner. The Turks have not come swarming over the intrenched battalions of Krudener and Schahofskoi out there in their bivouacs at Poradin and Trestenik and I am no captive of the bow and spear of Osman Pacha. I am a prisoner not of war but of weather. 'Ye gods, how it rains!' It has been raining hard now with but little intermission for three days and when it rains on the Danube it rains in torrents. Never have I seen such rain except at the commencement of the monsoon in Bengal when the sky seems to open and empty on the earth in one terrific downpour the vast contents of some huge celestial reservoir. It is impossible to travel. Even if horses could act, the traveller would require to sit forth

in a Boyton suit. Nevertheless, the Russian train waggons are on the move; for troops in the front must be fed, be the weather wet or dry. They come crawling over the bridge, and essay the steep hill leading from the river-side, up on to the high ground. The liquid mud at the bottom of the hill reaches to the axles. The waggons stick fast; men soaked to the marrow yell and scream, and belabour the horses, which reply by threatening to lie down in the sea of mud. Then the horses from other waggons are brought, and double and treble teams are hitched on. There is a wild scramble, and the waggons are on the level, the horses trembling and panting.

Now look at the waggons and their contents. Some are laden with sacks of bread and biscuits. These are soaked to a pulp, and brown water, thickened and coloured with the coarse flour, is streaming from the bottoms of the uncovered carts. Others carry boxes of tea. Some of these have burst because of the swelling of the tea, which has absorbed the wet; and from all a cold infusion of tea-leaves is dripping fast into the mud below. The sugar-loaves with which others are laden are slowly crumbling; "loaf" is becoming "moist" with a vengeance, and a Frenchman might rejoice in the unlimited supply of *eau sucrée* which the profuse drippings of the waggons afford. But the rain is impartial; it does not content itself with sweetening in this way the knee-deep slush; it is bent also on imparting to it a pleasant admixture of a saline character. Some carts are laden with rough salt in sacks, others with huge lumps of rock salt. The latter are stubborn. They wane, but, not so absorbent as the loaves of sugar, they do not become wholly demoralized, but retain their form. But the salt in the sacks is rapidly disappearing bodily. You may watch the rough canvas gradually collapsing as the thick dirty-white fluid oozes through the pores of it. Before the train reaches its destination I reckon that quite two-thirds of the stores it conveys will have been absolutely destroyed.

Fancy troops out in the open in such weather! Our men had a little taste of mud and rain at Dartmoor, and later in the swamps near Pirbrook, but the rain there was child's play to this. And the Russian tents are not like the stout bell-tents of the British army, while many of the Russian troops—the Cossacks for instance—have no tents at all. You may, indeed, trust in God in such weather; but it is impossible to keep your powder dry, and fighting is a physical impracticability. The reinforcements, nevertheless, under the pressure of extreme necessity, are trying to press

onward through Roumania, but their progress is very slow, and their plight is pitiable. One day's good heavy rain would have been of service to the Russian army in Bulgaria. It would have purified the atmosphere, laid the dust, cooled the air, and washed away the mass of impurity which makes so noxious the purlieus of a Russian camp. With sunshine on the following day, the men would have dried their clothes, relit their fires, opened up their tents to the sun, and been not a whit the worse. But it is very different under the conditions of this continuous deluge. Everything becomes soddened, the men hardy as they are, sink in physique, and become soddened like their belongings. Diarrhœa sets in and lapses into dysentery. The weak points of men not wholly sound are found out, and sound men become unsound. The spirits suffer, despondency and nostalgia make themselves felt. The hospitals fill up. If infectious disease once breaks out, it spreads with fell rapidity.

I am not theorizing. I speak from well remembered experience of the army of Prince Frederick Charles engaged in the siege of Metz, in the wet autumn of 1870—and be it remembered that his army was housed in the French villages, and had a supply base at Courcelles, whither the railway brought provisions to within sound of the firing of Fort St Julien. It appears that rain is not common in the month of August in Roumania and Bulgaria, so that the exceptionally bad fortune of the Russians with regard to weather still pursues them. But the inhabitants concur in saying that when at this season the weather does break, the rain endures for a fortnight at a stretch and that the weather remains unsettled throughout the month of September. In compensation October is dry and fine, and when there has been rain in the summer the winter is late in coming. Last year, in Servia snow fell in the last week of October, and by the first week in November military operations had become impossible. This rain now may give the Russians a longer term for marching and fighting later in the season.

In the meantime military operations are wholly at a standstill. Of course both sides are doing their best in the way of preparation for future work, but the pause in actual fighting for the present seems universal. With the army headquarters within an easy ride of the Danube, and with quietude reigning everywhere, a good many of the officers of the general staff are running across to Bucharest on a short visit of business or pleasure. I saw yesterday on his way back Prince Cantacuzene, who well earned a brief respite from toil and exposure by the gallantry and industry which he displayed throughout

the livelong day of the disastrous fighting in front of Plevna. One may be sure there is no fighting in the wind when one sees Prince Wittgenstein for ever so short a time away from the army. There is no more eager fighting man in all the host of the Czar than this bearer of a name so well known in military annals. General Stern, the commandant of the Grand Duke's headquarters, has been to Bucharest for a day,—it may safely be reckoned more on business than on pleasure.

The Turkish quarter of Sistova is now a hospital. All the abandoned houses have been cleared out, furnished with beds and hospital appliances, and filled with wounded men as they came in from about Plevna. I have no great faith in the operating skill of the Russian surgeons. I remember that in Servia, when a difficult case occurred, there was always anxiety to have the services of Mr. MacKellar, Mr. Attwood, or Mr. Hume, the professional representatives of the British Society of the Order of St. John. But in care for their wounded the Russians surpass any nation of whose war making I have had any experience. A great proportion, by far indeed the larger proportion, of the service is voluntary, and tendered with an untiring devotion and free-handed liberality which excite the highest admiration and respect. Ladies of rank forswear comfort and the pleasures of society to come with the army and minister to the wounded. There is no *arrière pensée* in their devotion to this duty. They do not write letters to the Russian papers detailing their experiences, exalting themselves by inferential self-praise, and attitudinizing before the world as paragons of self-abnegation. If you want to know of them and their work, you must seek for them and it. They dress with the most studied plainness—I can recall other scenes where the coif of a comely "sister" has been made to assume a wonderfully coquettish aspect, and where a little flirtation was not unacceptable as the interlude to playing at nursing—and they fare very hard, without a thought of self. They tend Turkish and Russian wounded with equal care, and are zealots in their duties day and night.

One cannot say as much for the supply system of the Russian army as for its hospital arrangements. The subject of the Russian supply is extremely complicated; I have been asking about it ever since I joined the army, and I confess I don't nearly understand it yet. There is a duplex organization—a civilian and a quasi-military organization. A Jewish company, consisting of three brothers named Horovitch, are the contractors for the supply of food to the Russian army, including forage for the horses. They convey supplies, as I understand, to certain central depôts which are specified from

time to time, whence the supplies are conveyed by the train carts of the respective divisions or brigades. But there is also a concurrent system of supply from the base in Russia, which is of a military character. The waggons are driven by soldiers, their movements are directed by intendants in uniform, and they are accompanied by escorts. Further, intendants go about purchasing supplies for their own divisions in the same territory where the civilian agents of the Company Horovitch are buying supplies to enable that company to fulfil its contract. This must create mischief by producing competition.

But the duplex system produces confusion as well as competition. But for the absence of red tape among the Russian officials, the realization of the fact that, if men are hungry, they must be fed, and that if cattle are wanted and are in a neighbouring field and there is money in the regimental treasury, or, in fact, forthcoming from any source, these cattle are to be purchased—but for this common sense recognition of the truth that, come what will, men are not to be allowed to starve, there would have been an incalculable amount of distress. If Commissary General Stiffneck had “declined to take the responsibility” of issuing stores on the requisition of blunt Colonel Straightforward, who saw that his men were hungry and had indented on the nearest depository of rations, and required the authority of the commissary of the brigade to which Colonel Straightforward happened to belong, and the endorsement of General Stubborn commanding the brigade, and if the commissary of the brigade had returned Colonel Straightforward’s requisition as informal because the quantity of pepper required for his regiment was miscalculated by one thirty-seventh part of an ounce, or because the salt needed was entered in the wrong column, and if General Stubborn had refused his endorsement because the commissary sent a clerk for it instead of coming himself, and if, after all formality had been complied with, Commissary-General Stiffneck had still “declined the responsibility of issue” because he had no definite authorization to dispense the stores in his possession, and insisted on a reference to the chief of the department at headquarters—then I believe that among Russian men and horses there would have been a large mortality. The Russians imitate our own army service supply system in its notorious absence of red tape in emergency, and so the soldiers do not starve. But I should not like to have the work of setting straight and systematizing the supply accounts of the campaign in which provisioning has gone on

in a manner so varied and miscellaneous. Messrs. Turquand, Young, and Company would find the "European" liquidation with all its complicated ramifications the merest child's play of calculation to such a herculean task as this.

I understand that Colonel Brackenbury, R.A., who has been acting as the Military Correspondent of the *Times*, does not continue his functions, but is going home, recalled by other duties. In one sense I envy him his experiences, in another I commiserate him. He had the good luck to accompany General Gourko throughout the whole of that wonderful raid of his across the Balkans; he had the bad fortune to be unable to forward with any regularity or reasonable dispatch his narrations of the episodes of that romantic ride. It is not from Colonel Brackenbury, but from the officers whom he accompanied, that I have gathered particulars of his experiences in the Balkans. They are loud in their praise of his cheerful endurance of extraordinary hardships, his British coolness under fire, the sagacity as well as the frankness of his comments, and his hearty camaraderie. They tell me that his horse died soon after leaving Tirnova; that he made the march on a casual pony; that he had neither baggage nor supplies, neither blanket, tent, nor even macintosh; that he shared the fare of the common soldiers, black bread and apricots, and slept with them on the dew-laden grass. The Russians just now are not fond of us as a nation, but I have never found them backward in according warm appreciation to individual merit, especially when that merit is of a kind that recommends itself to the practical soldier. General Ignatieff said to me the other day that "Colonel Brackenbury had earned the respect and admiration of every officer and soldier in General Gourko's command,"—praise which I regard as a compliment to the British army. It is fortunate that Colonel Brackenbury's narrative, although delayed by circumstances impossible for him to conquer, is not lost, and it cannot fail to be a valuable contribution to our military literature.

* IMPERIAL AND ARMY HEADQUARTERS, GORNY STUDEN, *August 17th*.
—The Emperor is pleasantly quartered in a good house on a slope outside the village, with his suite in tents around. The air is pure in contrast with the stench of Bjela. The health of the suite is much improved, but General Ignatieff is still ailing, and Prince Galatzin has been obliged to leave for Karlsbad. The Emperor to-day, with the Grand Duke Nicholas, reviewed the 4th Rifle Brigade as it marched from its encampment here toward Plevna. His Majesty

seemed in excellent health and spirits. The reports as to his illness and despondency are utterly baseless. The rifle brigade he reviewed consisted of four battalions of admirable light infantry armed with Berdins. It will constitute a valuable reinforcement for the Plevna forepost work which threatens, pending serious operations, to become rather warm. The reinforcements are taking a somewhat circuitous route in order to leave the direct thoroughfare open for supplies. The Second division has camped on the downs above Akcair. The Third division is on the march about Simnitz or Sistova.

The stream of reinforcement is flowing now steadily down through Roumania. It is expected that both the Guard Corps and the Grenadier Corps, comprising the picked soldiers of Russia, will be in Bulgaria by the first week in September. The staff here calculate that 180,000 men are now actually on the march to reinforce the army. The next battle about Plevna is meant to be decisive, and hence the delay for the sake of ensuring success so far as numbers are concerned. Meanwhile General Zotoff, chief of the 4th Corps, is in command of the Russian troops holding position in front of Plevna, which is now strongly entrenched and armed with artillery. The Grand Duke in person will take the command when active operations begin.

The 4th Cavalry Division has been detached on an independent expedition, for the purpose of stopping the Turkish communication with Sophia across the Balkans, by blocking the Orkhanieh Pass, the main thoroughfare and the easiest marching route over the Balkans. It is felt here that this should have been done earlier, but if successful it will still have good results, and its value in the event of a crushing Turkish defeat at Plevna does not need to be pointed out. It would go far to make another Sedan. The expedition is obviously hazardous, and its fortunes will be watched with great interest.

The Turks at Plevna seem manifesting some intention of taking the offensive, to judge by their pushing cavalry reconnaissances in more than one direction, presumably as feelers. With one of these there was a smart skirmish on the 17th near Tucenica, a village south-east of Plevna, close to the Russian forepost line.

The Russian military authorities think there is some probability that General Zimmermann will be attacked in his position in the Dobrudzha. They have learned that the Turks have withdrawn numerous forces from Asia, and have evacuated Sukhum-Kaleh, bringing away the troops occupying

it, along with large detachments of revolted Abhasians, and, having landed these troops at Varna, are concentrating them and others about Bazardjik, which certainly portends operations against General Zimmermann. The command of the sea is invaluable to the Turks, who now enjoy the advantage which substantially enabled General Diebitsch to achieve the success of 1828. General Zimmermann will be reinforced.

There was a bombardment from Giurgevo against the Rustchuk position on the 14th and 15th. It came about by reason of the construction by the Turks of new batteries facing Slobosia and Malarus, the intention being to discover the extent of their armament, and if possible destroy them. The Turkish return fire is reported to be silenced, but earth-works are not easily destroyed by a few hours' shell fire. The mills which grind meal for the Rustchuk garrison were burnt by the shell fire.

General Gourko has left Bulgaria altogether, and gone back to the Russian frontier to resume the command of his own division of the Cavalry Guard, now on the march to the seat of war. His Balkan work has materially enhanced his already high reputation as a dashing cavalry leader. General Radetsky, commanding the 8th Corps, is now in chief command at Tirnova and beyond. The weather is now fine again, and the roads are rapidly changing from mud to dust. I am informed that the recent rains have not materially affected the health of the troops.

Let me give an instance of the manly candour of the Russian military authorities. It cannot be said that my telegram narrating the Battle of Plevna was not perfectly plainspoken. It strove to tell the truth without fear or favour. I may confess to apprehensions that my plain speaking would not altogether be taken in good part, and good-natured friends have freely predicted my expulsion from the scene of operations. I have been sent for by General Nepokoitchitsky, and formally told that telegraphic instructions had been sent from the headquarters to the official newspapers in Russia, to the effect that, pending the preparation of the official report of the Plevna battle, the telegram in question was to be reprinted by them, and accepted as substantially accurate as regards details and results. It is naturally much more pleasant for a Correspondent to chronicle a triumph than the reverse, and I look forward with hope at no distant date to transmit intelligence of a Russian victory.

The following letter presents a summary view of the state of Russian military affairs in the third week in August :—

* RUSSIAN HEADQUARTERS GORYSTUDEN, *August 22nd, morning* —

A very interesting crisis seems impending in the war, a crisis of extreme technical interest to the student of war and of momentous consequence in a general sense, whatever be its issue. The Russians since the Battle of Plevna have been tied to the defensive, and not always the successful defensive, but as they are invaders it behoves them to resume the offensive, whatever their scheme substantially or

sive, with occasional and ominous strokes of the offensive. Theoretically, at least, their situation is the better one, since they have the choice of alternatives. They may strike if they consider the chances justify their striking, they may adhere to the defensive if the defensive promises better results, but appearances would indicate that they mean to take the offensive, and as the Russians are tied to this course, the question of the next few days is which side will anticipate the other in taking the offensive. A fortnight should suffice to solve the problem.

According to information on which I am entitled to rely, it is certain that the Russians will not be in an advantageous position to resume the offensive for a week, and it is certain that they will indeed that they must, do so as soon as they are ready. What an interesting climax of a most interesting period it would be were both sides simultaneously to abandon the defensive and strike blow for blow! Only this must be considered, that the first offensive action of the Russians must necessarily be concentrated against the Turkish Plevna front, while it is in the power of the Turks to strike at the Russians simultaneously all round the edge of the broad oval now in Russian occupation in Bulgaria. It is a nervous time for the Russians till their strength increases sufficiently to put them comparatively at their ease. Any day the blow may fall and strain their resources to the utmost. The Turks by no means allow them to build on the assurance that there will be no hard fighting till the Grand Duke Nicholas gives the signal for his stout fellows to fall on. On the contrary, their attitude is actively menacing all the way round.

On the 16th there was a general reconnaissance in some force by the Turks all along the Russian left flank. From the Danube to beyond the Balkans, from under the guns of Rustchuk, from Rasgrad from Osman Bazar towards Bebrova, and at half a dozen intermediate places, the soldiers of Mehemet Ali Pacha beat up the Russian positions confronting them. There was not much hard fighting, and

probably little loss on either side, but the significance of the business was that the Turks took the initiative.

From the Tundja Valley on the same day a column of Suleiman Pacha's force attempted strenuously to force the Hankoi Pass. It has been reported that success attended this effort, but I am officially assured that this was not so. A Turkish column did indeed force its way into the defile, but was there so roughly handled by the Russian artillery in position, and by a regiment of the 9th Division holding the pass, that it was compelled to retire.

A day or two later a Turkish division made a threatening demonstration from Grivica, a strong Turkish position in front of Plevna. The Turks are by no means resting after this work, now some days past. Up till now they continue to display a modified activity. They struck out from Rustchuk the day before yesterday. On the same day there was fighting, although not serious, before Osman-Bazar. I myself, riding along the Plevna front on the same day, was witness of an artillery skirmish in front of Skobelev's position near Loftcha, where the Turks began the ball, and the Cossacks under Skobelev's command are harassed day and night by forepost work. Now, all this may portend the close approach of the Turkish offensive. On the other hand, it may mean simply the determination of the Turkish generals so to employ the Russians all round the semicircle as to hinder concentration on any particular point. Whatever their intentions, it is certain that Turkish policy disturbs the Russian dispositions.

In a recent telegram I told you that the 2nd Division, having crossed the Danube, was massed here preparatory to marching in the Plevna direction. Suleiman Pacha is threatening to attack the Shipka Pass with forty battalions. The defenders of the Pass consist of but twenty companies under General Stöletoff, consisting of the relics of the Bulgarian Legion and three battalions of the 9th Russian Division. The 2nd Division has therefore been diverted from its intended destination, and is being marched on Selvi to relieve a brigade of the 9th Division, ordered to the Shipka. In a recent visit to the Plevna front I was surprised to find that so few reinforcements as yet had reached the Russian troops holding it. Compared with before the battle there is but the addition of the Roumanians, and the 16th Division; but to-day are crossing the Danube eight thousand reserves to fill up the gaps made by the war in the ranks of the 9th Corps which, when these join in a few days, will restore that corps to its full strength. On the other hand, Schahofskoy has

marched his brigade of the 32nd Infantry Division back to his original position at Kosarevac, confronting Osman Bazar, and he will meddle no more with the work he found so hard. Thus on the Plevna front, when the 9th Corps gets its complement, the Russians will have two full army corps, the Fourth and Ninth—the former is nearly complete, the latter will be wholly so—at least, nominally—two Roumanian divisions of infantry and the 11th Cavalry Division. Skobelev's detachment, consisting of a brigade of Circassian Cossacks, with some infantry and artillery, is watching Loftcha. There is to be included also the 9th Cavalry Division, and I roughly estimate the whole Russo Roumanian force confronting Plevna at from sixty five to seventy thousand men. In this estimate I do not include the 4th Cavalry Division, whose line of detached operation is toward the road through the Balkans from Sophia. The Russians before Plevna are unquestionably inferior in numerical strength to Osman Pacha's army.

To my thinking the Russians have over-fortified their semicircle of environment. Roughly, they have three lines of spadework, and great indulgence in spadework, or rather in the shelter of spadework, is apt to detract from the prompt, vivacious fighting impulse in the open. The works are rough enough, and the redoubts sometimes are faultily placed on slopes leaning toward the enemy's cannon, and so needlessly exposing their interior instead of crowning the ridge, at once a better protected and more wide ranging position. But it must be said that the troops have been very industrious, and there can be no question of their anxious eagerness to be allowed to fight again. Indeed, they do not smother their murmurs at the delay, which I do not think will be so long now as most people imagine.

The Russian authorities are greatly pleased with the appearance and apparent efficiency of the Roumanian artillery. Indeed, the Roumanian troops are everywhere now spoken of with a consideration not previously evinced. Information has reached the Russian headquarters that the Turks were organizing a sweeping massacre of Christians in the Babrova district, between Osman Bazar and the Balkans, and a cavalry regiment has been sent thither to afford protection.

The Russian corps, brigades, and divisions are curiously split up and intermixed. No importance is apparently attached to the cohesion of any of these integers, and the service does not seem to suffer from this dispersion. The 3rd Division now near here goes forward to Plevna. In my summary of the Plevna force I omitted the 4th Rifle Brigade, now on the

march thither from here. The bulk of the reinforcements are somewhat delayed on the way from the Russian base, but the Guard Cavalry Division is expected to cross the Danube in a fortnight, and a brigade per day to follow in a steady stream.

The water is bad here. The Emperor has been slightly indisposed, but is now quite recovered.

The following two letters describe a visit to a number of the Russian positions :—

* **TIRNOVA, August 22nd.**—I had wasted some days at Sistova waiting to witness the crossing of reinforcements which never came, and at length I determined on a sort of roving cruise round the edge of the ground held by the Russians in Bulgaria, terminable at any moment by the prospect of more interesting work turning up.

In the first instance I went westward along the familiar road to the Plevna front. The position of the army there I have already treated of by telegram, and need not recapitulate. In Karajac Bugarski, which village was the headquarters of General Prince Schahofskoy two days before the battle of Plevna, I found established the headquarters of Baron Krüdener. He himself was not at home, having gone to Nicopolis to witness the crossing of the Roumanian cavalry. The chief of his staff was good enough to give me what information I wanted, and I rode on toward Poradim. The reserves, which are arriving to fill up the blanks in the ranks of the 9th Corps, will be very acceptable. One regiment in it can hardly be said to exist, having lost 2,000 men in the first discreditable mischance at Plevna, and others are very much attenuated by the hard fortune of war. All along the fall of the swell between Karajac and Poradim, the Russians have constructed continuous shelter trenches, with any number of little rifle pits in front of them. This is now nominally their third line of defence; it was their first, when on the day after the battle General Zotoff arrived, countermanded the order for the retreat on the line of the Osma, gathered what troops he could find together, and hardened his heart to stand fast. Since then he has wonderfully improved his position and gained a deal of ground, having his forepost line quite closely embracing the Turkish positions. The utility of this will be found when the next battle comes to be fought.

On the 31st July most of the troops under Schahofskoy's command had to march some ten miles before they reached

striking distance of the enemy, and although good soldiers will fight under any conditions, however untoward, a wise commander will ever try to bring his men into action as fresh as possible, and, moreover, to let them have their breakfasts before they begin to fight—a precaution which, I understand, was neglected throughout the troops under Schahofskoy's command. It may be said that to see that the men had their breakfasts is scarcely the duty of a general in command of an army, and that if the regimental chiefs are good for anything they must be good enough for seeing to this. I know no better regimental chiefs in the wide world than those of the German army, but nevertheless in his orders issued the evening before Gravelotte Prince Frederick Charles did not omit to ordain that his men should not go into action with empty bellies. "The — corps, quitting its bivouac at — o'clock, will march over — to — and will there halt and cook its food, marching forward on — at — o'clock." I quote from memory the exact form of the order, leaving blank the details, but the Crown Prince's orders at Sedan contained similar instructions, and everywhere the Germans recognized that it is not the Englishman alone who "fights best on a full stomach."

As I rode down into Paradim past the yard where the forlorn staff of Schahofskoy gathered for orders and consultation on the morning after the battle, I passed some companies of the 30th Division tramping down towards the big kettles by the side of the brook to obtain each man his portion of soup. The companies did not muster strong, for the regiment belonged to that brigade of the division which suffered heaviest at Plevna. I feel very deeply for poor General " " " " then commanded this division, discredit since for his conduct by story, and I prefer avoiding details but this I would aver with some confidence that it was not cowardice which prompted General Powzanoff's withdrawal from the field of battle. I believe that he lost his head, but not that his heart failed him. He came into our tent on the afternoon before the battle and having introduced himself, spoke in a very soldier-like manner of the " " " " he left us " " " " as he seems " " " " seen war in earnest before, they took both his brigades out of his hands and I suppose he went to pieces. The story goes that the Grand Duke sent him away with a fine mixture of arbitrary assumption of profound medical knowledge and of

genuine kindly feeling for a soldier in misfortune. "I observe that you are very ill, and that there is no chance of your recovering your health without returning to Russia." "But, your Imperial Highness, I am not ill at all. I never was better in my life!" "Allow me, please, to know better. I can see you are ailing seriously, and I must recommend you to recover your health in the bosom of your family." Such is reported to have been the dialogue.

With the war correspondent the aphorism *omne ignotum pro magnifico* undergoes a modification into *omne invisum pro parvo*. He finds human nature too strong for him, and undervalues that of which he himself has not had the good fortune to have been the eye-witness. There were war correspondents with the Russian army who opined that the battle of Plevna was but a "check"—not a reverse. I remember having heard a funny story reported as having been told by a quaint old Scotch divine. Noah, having embarked his cargo, was engaged in navigating his bark when he was accosted in a friendly and affable manner by the Devil, paddling around in a canoe on the surface of the flood. The point of the story lay in the terms of his Satanic Majesty's greeting to the aquatic patriarch. "Moist weather, Mr. Noah!" were the words which the Scotch parson put in the mouth of Lucifer, and they describe the Flood about as accurately as the term "a check" characterizes the defeat of Plevna. But be it what you will, it will not be through the default of correspondents that the next Battle of Plevna is not described in full detail in probably every land boasting a newspaper. Several congregated prematurely, others came later, but still too early, and Poradim is almost as strongly garrisoned by correspondents as by soldiers.

General Zotoff, who has command of the whole Army of Plevna, has his headquarters there. I had not the advantage of making the general's acquaintance, and, therefore, cannot say whether his leading characteristic appears to be wiliness; but there is one indication that such is the case. The field telegraph wire from the great headquarters in Gorny Studen terminates in Karajac Bugarski, and has not been carried on to Poradim, whither from the previous place all telegrams have to be sent by Cossacks. The electric telegraph is a nuisance always, but is, perhaps, the worst of all nuisances when it communicates between an anxious headquarter and an outlying general. Despatches arrive just as he is dining, messages come even while he is enjoying slumber. Tcherniaieff used to say at Deligrad that if any kind friend would abolish the telegraph wire between Belgrade and him he

would give a year of his life. But if a general in command elects to be cut off from direct communication with the chief headquarters, there seems no reason why he should neglect to be thus en rapport with the several headquarters of the divisions under his command. I have said that the telegraph is a nuisance, as I suppose not a few of your readers have reason to know. It is an instrument in warfare worth many rifles and sabres. But here is this Plevna army with its headquarters unconnected by wire with a single subsidiary headquarters. It is wearisome to speak even in terms of comparison—ever odious—of the German army as contrasted with the Russian army, but at least I may urge that the German army is the Russian model, and I cannot resist the impulse to say that I have seen a telegram expedited from the headquarters of a Prussian general ten minutes after they were fixed at the end of a twenty-mile march, the setting up of the field-telegraph having kept pace practically with the march of the troops. Every Russian division has a telegraph train attached to it, whose drums contain a hundred versts of wire, yet the Czarewitch was days at Obertenik on the road to Rustchuk, without telegraph communication with the Imperial headquarters at Bjela, barely fifteen miles in his rear.

In the Plevna Army I found a strong belief existing that there would be no Russian action for a fortnight at least. I have since heard that the term named may probably be shortened, but if I were to venture my own individual opinion it would be to the effect that quite a fortnight will elapse before there is fighting at Plevna, if the initiative is permitted to remain with the Russians. I believe that twelve heavy siege guns are about to be brought up—whether for defence or for offence I know not. I only know that about Plevna I have seen nothing to bombard with as the term is distinguishable from the term to shell. If the Russians are to begin bombarding field works with heavy siege guns, the Turks may show a front before Plevna till you in England are cooking your Christmas puddings, and longer. The road to Plevna is in through the back door, while a continuous rat-tat is being kept up on the front door.

Of the strength of the Plevna force I have this morning sent you an estimate, which is, perhaps, on second thoughts, somewhat over-stated. One may speculate in vain as to the thoughts of Uriah the Hittite when he found himself placed in the fore part of the battle, since he has left us no record of his emotions, but I imagine they must not have differed materially from those now felt by the Roumanian cavalry

division in the singularly hazardous excursion across the River Vid, on which by order they have embarked. In a very short time, as a sententious Russian put it to me, the Roumanian cavalry will be either heroes or mince meat.

Poradim was very drowsy when I left it late in the afternoon, to ride eastward through Bulgareni, to the head-quarters at Gorny Studen, there to gather some details concerning a movement of which a hint had reached me. In a previous letter I tried to describe the devious course of the river Osma about Bulgareni. On the main chaussée (conventionally) running east and west, the bridge over the river had gone, and a long détour had been necessary to reach a high peaked stone bridge crossing the river a little to the north-west of Bulgareni. As I rode across this bridge on the morning after the battle, when a surging mass of vehicles was struggling for the precedence of single file, it struck me how disastrous would have been the result had the Turks pursued. The river Osma, although narrow, is a deep trench, seldom fordable, and this bridge, eight feet wide at the most, and with a very lofty and difficult pitch, was the sole means of crossing it in Schahofskoy's rear. Bulgareni is not twenty miles from Sistova, and a couple of pontoons might have been brought in a few hours—there are plenty of surplus ones on the Danube now. But such a precaution at facilitating the means of retreat, should retreat be necessary, did not appear to have occurred to anybody, and the neglect might have produced a catastrophe equal in its degree, as it would have been similar in character, to the concluding scenes of the tragedies of the Beresina and Königgrätz.

With other men, other counsels, is no unfair assumption, and I certainly anticipated that, to ease the passage of supplies, and facilitate the march of reinforcements, to say nothing of wise precaution, there would by this time have been other means of crossing the Osma at Bulgareni than the old high-keyed bridge. But the anticipation was not justified, although three weeks have elapsed since the battle was fought. The approaches have indeed been dug for two additional bridges, and the military carpenters are chopping away at the massive obsolete structures intended as central piers, and gradually taking such form as enables one to judge that the woodwork of bridges is in preparation. On my return journey, travelling towards Gorny Studen, I suffered for the belief I had dared to cherish that it was impossible but that the Russians should have repaired the bridge on the main chaussée on the main line of march from the headquarters of concentration to the headquarters

of operation I would not cross the old stone bridge, and rode straight into the heart of the deceitful peninsula. There were troops around the villages studding its fertile bosom—it was not possible that they had been marched round by the stone bridge to reach these camping grounds! But when I gained the bank of the Osmā, opposite the gap in the hills through which the chaussée route strikes away eastward to Gorny Studen, I found no bridge ready. The men were working at one cumbrous, primitive affair, which will probably be ready in a few days—a commencement had just been made on a second bridge. Such is the progress achieved during three weeks of so called preparation for another attack on Plevna! Too disgusted to go back, I swam my riding horse across the ugly, sullen Osmā, but my waggon had ignominiously to return, and effect the crossing at the original stone bridge.

At Gorny Studen this morning, I was told that Suleiman Pacha is threatening the Shipka Pass, and that the 2nd Division, under the command of Prince Imeretinski, had been sent away to release from Selva reinforcements for the scanty body of defenders—only about some twenty companies—with which General Stoletoff was holding the Pass. It would be eminently worth while to be there if the threatened attack should actually be made, and I determined to start at once, but, on the other hand, I was cautioned that I would do well to be back at Gorny Studen by the 27th inst., if I wished to witness still more important operations from their commencement. My only hope then was that if there was to be fighting at the Shipka, it should occur on the only day which I had available for witnessing it—the 24th, since it would be necessary for me to quit the Balkans on my return journey to Gorny Studen on the 25th. It was rather a forlorn hope on which to set out on a four days' ride, but then I have never been beyond Tirnova, and a man who is interested in this war ought to see the Shipka Pass simply as the gratification of a legitimate curiosity.

My companions and myself, leaving Gorny Studen this morning before the heat of the day acquired its full intensity, struck almost due south by mere cart tracks linking together the pretty villages in the leafy hollows. No prettier country can well be imagined. It undulates fantastically, and presents continual surprises of diversified surface, but everywhere trees are dotted singly or in clumps, which give the scene a park-like aspect. There are no soldiers anywhere, save an occasional post of some half-dozen men encamped in a clump of trees on the outskirts of a village, and peace and

plenty reign without alloy. On the threshing-floors in their farmyards, the peasants—if peasant is indeed the proper term for a man who owns land, and cattle, and horses—are winnowing the barley-grain from the straw by the time-honoured plan of driving a team of ponies round and round over the straw. Some use the fore-carriage of an ox-waggon with a mass of weighted branches trailing behind; but the ponies are most common in this actual “treading of” the threshing-floor. It is clear that the sufferings under which the Bulgarians north of the Balkans professed to labour at the hands of the Turks could not have been of a kind affecting their material prosperity, for we find them as the Turks left them, wealthy in agricultural possessions beyond any farmer-peasantry of whom I have any cognisance.

The beautiful and romantic Zavrada Pass, which constitutes a natural approach of surpassing grandeur to Tirnova—that surely most picturesque of all towns—can never lose its charm. The combination of water, rock, and foliage is perfect, and every turn in the winding road affords a fresh joy. But while we felt the beauty of the scene, we felt, too, how different from now were the auspices under which we first traversed that pass. We were with the cortège of the Grand Duke when he rode into Tirnova amid the plaudits and the glad weeping of a population beside themselves with joy. Flowers were showered down from the windows, and strewn his path; priests and girls struggled for the honour of kissing his hand. To be with the Russians in Tirnova then was to be a welcome guest, for every door stood open. The strains of triumphal music swept along the quaint narrow streets, and the precipices, amid which the town hangs rather than is built, sent back a melodious echo.

How strong the contrast now! The road up the steep into the town was blocked by a double row of vehicles, one driven by weary and somewhat irritable Russian soldiers, the other by sullen Bulgarians, who have found out with great alacrity that they have rights since the Russians came, and are not only no longer subservient, but even in a tentative way inclined to be uncivil if they can but harden their nerves. The place was never clean, but it is fouler now than ever. Above the entrance stands, gaunt and ugly, the skeleton of a triumphal arch, to which no more clings the last shred of decoration: it looked like the gallows mourning the abolition of capital punishment. The narrow street was a disheartening chaos of vehicles, whose horses scrambled about over the filthy stones; of miserable fugitives squatting listlessly wherever they could find a corner, or trying to push through with their

donkeys laden with clothes and children, of Bulgarian civilians foolishly drunk and reeling about over the stones, amid the jeers of the Russian soldiers, of limp Bulgarian lads in uniform, of whom the Russians will persist in trying to make soldiers, a service for which they lack alike heart and stamina, of time worn men of the original Bulgarian Legion, who having come somehow out of the pandemonium of Eski Zagra with uncut throats, have drifted back hither demoralized and disgusted, of German Jew chapmen, selling everything from bad champagne to rubbishing boots, of marketenders seeking shops whereat to replenish their waggons, and of Bulgarian priests walking about in long petticoats

I went to the house to which on my previous visit I had been welcomed with open arms, and now found some difficulty in getting in—I think indeed, that I should have been refused altogether had I not recurred to the memory of the landlady the fact that I paid well for my previous entertainment. As for my horses, the only place I could find for them was a wretched subterranean stable under a loathsome khan—a stable reached by successive tiers of rotten and foul stone steps and when there neither hay nor corn was to be had for them, they had to be fed on bread. It was too late to call on General Radetzky or General Dragomiroff, who I had been told had been both resident in the place. All I could learn was that a mass of troops had marched off the day before in the direction of Gabrova, and that further detachments had gone on later.

* *GABROVA, August 23rd*—I was heartily glad at an early hour

of Tirmova
we cleared
turesquely

impracticable town behind, entered on the sublime defile by the side of the Jantra, under the shadow of great impending precipices. Presently we quitted the Jantra no more to see it till we reached the vicinity of Gabrova, and we threaded glen after glen, climbed steep after steep, passed through sweetly-situated village after village, all embowered in foliage, till we reached the Valley of the Drenova, and suddenly found ourselves looking down into the snug-looking town of Drenova. We abandoned for most part of the way the chaussee, with its clouds of dust and long trains of rattling provision wagons, and rode by the narrow hill tracks, which at once shortened the way and made it pleasanter. We rode through thick woods, where dense foliage shaded from the blistering sun rays, by wimpling streams on which were gurgling mill races,

and then came the cool splash of the water over the mill-wheel and the scent of the balsams and the thyme from the miller's garden, fringed by willows whose tresses laved themselves in the stream. We rode through verdant meadows, our horses' hoofs whisking aside the rich lush-grass, by babbling fountains, where from the face of a hoary wall which the Romans might have built, but on which the Turks have carved an inscription, springs a crystal jet of clear water, transparent as glass, cold as ice, grateful alike to the parched throat and the burning temples. We skirted vineyards where the heavy masses of dark green foliage but half screened the pale green clusters of grapes just beginning to soften into ripeness, by orchards over whose walls the plum-branches nodded heavy with yellow and purple globes, by detached farmsteadings, each one the habitation of several families, united to each other by the ties of relationship.

The ride would have been an unadulterated pleasure but for the heat and the miserable fugitives. Let me speak first of the minor detraction from our enjoyment. I may claim to know something of heat. I have been in the Red Sea in July. I have ridden with Sir Richard Temple across the parched *maidans* of Bengal in the month of May, when the thermometer in the dead of night never fell below 106, and when two indigo planters betted among themselves which of the two of us would the earlier succumb to sunstroke. I know how the Nepaul Terai reeks in the hot season, and I know the hot closeness of a Highland glen in August; but for fierce, cruel, blazing, burning, scorching heat, I have never felt anything to compare with the last ten days in Bulgaria. Somehow, ragingly hot as it is, the heat does not enervate one greatly, for it is a dry heat; but it melts one, it burns one, it so blisters the face that the skin of it becomes painful to the touch. As I write, I look across at my companion, and I can compare him, so far as colour goes, to nothing so truly as a boiled lobster; he returns the compliment with the aggravation that the boiled lobster I resemble in tint must have been boiled in a decoction of burnt sienna.

And now let me speak of those unfortunate creatures who, warned by the fate of their neighbours, have hurried across the Balkans to escape the fell retribution of the Turks. It is not for me now to inquire closely whether when Gourko's Cossacks were in their villages and Leuchtenberg's dragoons clanked along their streets, these Bulgarians were themselves full of nothing save the milk of human kindness toward—or should I say against?—their Turkish co-inhabitants, against whom the current of the fortune of war seemed to be setting so

swiftly and steadily. Let us take them as we find them. The whole road from Tirnova to Gabrova, but perhaps more especially between Drenova and Gabrova seemed one great picnic, but it was an inexpressibly mournful picnic. My artist companion revelled in the picturesqueness of the vivid colours of the women's dresses, but he had no heart to sketch the bivouacs in their profound misery. We were the witnesses not of a few handfuls of casual flightings, but of the general exodus of the inhabitants of a whole territory. There were peasants, but there were also families of a better class—families whose women dressed, not in Turkish trousers, in gaudy-patterned petticoats, and bodices of all the hues of the rainbow, but as the Englishwoman of to-day dresses. There were women to whom you felt it not quite the thing to speak without an introduction, and whose habitation was under a tree, whose means of conveyance was a donkey, on which they sat with a child in front of them, and another clinging behind them. Many had no means of conveyance at all save what God had given them, and one saw women plodding painfully, carrying children in their arms, whom they tried to shade with parasols, poor fond things—the tender folly of motherhood, when homes were blazing behind them, and misery about them and before them.

In Servia last year I had witnessed scenes which faintly fore-shadowed those of to-day, but as I rode along, what rose to my mind most vividly were the woeful stories of our own British women in the terrible times of the great Mutiny, when there passed away, all in a moment, the accustomed care for tatties, and punkahs, and thermantodotes and darkened rooms and all the manifold appliances of Anglo-Indian civilization, and there suddenly confronted them—and they rose to the occasion—the stern task of striving, under the burning sun, to save the lives of their dear ones. Most of the better-class fugitives told me that they had fled from Kezanlik, but, indeed the whole population of the southern slope of the Balkans have crossed the ridge, and are now drifting slowly down the northern slope. Many are stationary. They are waiting events. They are not the victims of panic, to whom assurance will only come when a sight of the Danube is attained. They are flying before a near, a tangible, and a fearful danger, but they had any indication of a prospect of safety for them in returning. The march of troops to-day, of which I shall presently speak, has arrested the flight of great masses of the fugitives. It has done more. I passed a goodly number actually tramping back in the wake of the column. They believed in the safety of Russian bayonets. But then it must

he said that most of these came from the villages on this side of the Shipka Pass.

The aspect of Drenova made me long for time to linger over its quaintnesses. It is as picturesque as is Tirnova, but quite in a different style. It owes little of its picturesqueness to its situation. But the houses ! They are almost without exception built with fronts of dark wood, elaborately carved and projecting storey over storey, till the third tier is reached, with outward sloping shutter flaps on the ground floor ; in the storeys above, massively grated windows, cut in the woodwork. What adds so much to the effect of houses so built is that along the face of many are carried trailing vine boughs, laden with rich clusters of fruit, which dangle in front of the windows, and give a charming freshness to the street. The architecture has a curious resemblance to that of many houses in the principal street in the Native town of Bombay, and the resemblance is heightened by the circumstance that several of the houses have their fronts rudely but brilliantly painted in fanciful and allegorical designs, chiefly of figures of a wildly impossible type in the present circumscribed condition of the animal kingdom.

I can do what it has never previously been in my power to do in respect to any place of public entertainment in Bulgaria. I can recommend the khan of Drenova as reasonably clean and fairly comfortable. Only it was full—crammed to the ceiling with fugitive families who could afford to pay for a room, or part of a room, pending events. But it was a great thing to get hay and corn for the horses, and a seat or cushion in a passage while we ate the soup and roast fowl which a pretty Bulgarian cook prepared for us. The road from Drenova to Gabrova, although a fair specimen of engineering skill, must be hard work for horses drawing vehicles. But we could not feel for the horses, for admiring the wonderful surprises of the scenery. The only road I know to compare to it in this respect is the route up into the Black Forest from Hausich, on the great Baden plain, to Freiburg, near the ridge where the waters of the Kinsig, flowing into the Rhine, and of the Danube, spring from two fountains not ten paces apart on the slope above St. Georges. During our journey we had seen but few soldiers. Certainly the Russians had left scanty supports between Tirnova and the “twenty companies” of whom my valued informant in Gorny Studen had spoken as constituting for the time the sole garrison of the Shipka Pass fortifications. But in a deep gully about six miles from Gabrova, we came on the reserve artillery train of two brigades of the 8th Army Corps. The waggons were being

dragged up the steep singly by spare teams of horses located there for the purpose

We descended once more into the Valley of the Jantra and in a meadow about two miles from Tirnova we found two infantry battalions just recommencing their march after a short halt. Their colonel rode to the rear the ambulance waggons followed friend The first time I met Co

55th, the Podolsk Regiment, was at Jilava, near Bucharest, when he was engaged in paying his men, the second time was on the Turkish bank of the Danube, on the morning of the crossing from Simnitza to Sistova. The blood was then flowing down the blade of his drawn sword from a bayonet wound the assault it up, and head of his

regiment, and now I was pleased to see the Cross of St George on his broad breast

Colonel Duhomn and we rode on together into Gabrova, and he told me about the dispositions. The Russians were paying the penalty, in forced marching in broiling weather, of disregarding eventualities. They had determined to hold the Balkan passes they had won—a wise determination, but they had neglected to have troops within easy distance in case they were threatened. Now, Suleiman Pacha is in Kezanlik and looking very grimly at the Shipka, and it is found necessary to reinforce “at the double” the “twenty companies” holding the pass. The 2nd Division had been diverted to Selvi, to relieve a brigade of the 9th Division and be handy for Loftcha. To reinforce the garrison of the Shipka there has been hastily gathered together the 2nd Brigade of the 14th Division—Dragomiroffs—of the 8th Corps, the 2nd Brigade of the 9th Division—Mirsky’s—of the same corps, and the sorely reduced Rifle Brigade, which has been across the Balkans with General Gourko, and has earned splendid renown, and suffered fearful losses in a dozen fights from Hankoi to Karabunar. The first brigade named is commanded by General Petroceni,

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fastly had his men marched that they had neither slept nor cooked for two days and two nights. And yet the stalwart fellows were not nearly beaten, but took the road again at a swinging pace and with a hearty chorus. They were marching without knapsacks and without baggage, they had

abandoned everything by the way that no delay should occur in their obedience to the peremptory and urgent summons. The colonel was much troubled because his men had insisted in giving away their bread to the hungry refugees, and he did not know where they were to find more. But he has a kind heart himself. At a short halt some refugee women begged him and his officers to take their children and educate them in Russia, where there were not Turks. "All in good time," was his reply. "We are going to fight now. When the Czar wills that we go home to Russia, then we may think of your children. God knows we are thinking of our own now."

As the column tramped through Gabrova the people gave bouquets of sweet flowers and wild thyme to the soldiers and crowded on the flanks with copious supplies of water. Duhonin and his men went on. I have stayed for the night in the town, where I am told are General Radetzky, commanding the 8th Corps, and General Dragomiroff, commanding the 14th Division; but I have been unable to find either. Most of the houses in Gabrova have been emptied of furniture to facilitate the quick flight of the inhabitants. I am in quite a mansion, but it contains not so much as a rug.

* GABROVA, *August 24th, Evening*.—Since I wrote the above, I have visited the Shipka Pass, and seen a battle. There is no time to write letters which the telegraph will supersede, and the necessity for reaching an available wire compels me to arrest at this point my intended ride round the Russian positions.

The following letter from another correspondent gives further details respecting the situation before Plevna and elsewhere.

† HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY BEFORE PLEVNA. PORADIM, *August 23rd*.—The mistake made by the Russians after the Battle of Plevna in not concentrating the whole army against Plevna, and taking it, is already beginning to produce its result. The Turks have been receiving reinforcements more rapidly and in greater numbers than the Russians, and are beginning to take the offensive all along the line. News was received here two days ago that large Turkish forces were concentrating in the valley of the Tundja against the Shipka Pass and an order was immediately sent by the Grand Duke for the Shipka Pass to be reinforced. I am not allowed to say whence these reinforcements were taken, but the fact seems to be that this movement on the part of the Turks was not calculated upon, and was not provided for.

To-day news has arrived that the Turks are driving the Russians back on the road between Osman Bazar and Tirnova, though it is not yet stated whether anything like a decisive battle has taken place there. Simultaneously with this, the information has arrived that 30,000 men under Saleiman Pacha, already spoken of as concentrating before Shipka, had attacked the Russian positions in the Pass with great vigour and resolution, and that this attack had been repulsed three times, after a struggle, with great losses on both sides. It is not known here whether the reinforcements sent off reached in time to take part in the battle, and the Russian position is now so critical everywhere that I do not mention how many troops there were to defend the Shipka Pass.

Not only have the Turks been taking the offensive at Osman Bazar and Shipka, but it has also been reported here that the Russians have sustained a defeat somewhere near Rasgrad, or somewhere between there and Rustchuk, the details of which are unknown here. For two days there has been considerable firing on our advanced posts, as though the Turks were preparing to take the offensive, and great movements of Turkish troops have taken place about Plevna. The day before yesterday artillery was moved out on the high road from Plevna towards Sistova and Nicopolis, together with ammunition trains and large numbers of infantry, as though they were preparing to attack, and the Russians have been on the alert, expecting an attack at any moment. However, no attack has taken place here up to the present, but to day we hear the thunder of artillery on the right, between the Russian right wing and Nicopolis, where the Roumanians are holding the line, and to conclude all, a strong Turkish detachment has marched out on the road from Loftcha towards Selvi, evidently with the intention of attacking that place. This movement is so serious that General Zotoff has sent a detachment under General Skobelev from his left wing to take this Turkish force on the flank, and force it to draw back on the right in that disadvantageous position. I am also obliged to avoid mentioning the strength of this detachment.

Reinforcements are arriving very slowly, and although it is known that three out of four divisions have crossed the Danube since the Battle of Plevna, I have not yet been able to ascertain where they have gone, nor can I see any indications of the Russians taking the offensive for a long time yet. What object there may be for thus remaining apathetically on the defensive when they have such imperative reasons for

pushing on the war to a rapid conclusion, I cannot imagine, but mismanagement in some quarter is evidently at the bottom of it. It is not likely that the Turkish offensive will produce any great result. I do not believe in the capacity of the Turks to direct an army on the offensive, but always have acknowledged the cohesion of the Turkish troops when fighting behind entrenchments. The mistake made by the Russians after the Battle of Plevna was in not continuing the attack on that place. They should have garrisoned the two Balkan passes and Tirnova and Sistova, abandoned the whole line occupied by the army of the Czarewitch, and then, by rapidly concentrating both armies against Plevna, have crushed it at a blow. They had six army corps even then across the Danube. Of these corps five have scarcely been under fire. Only one, the 9th, has severely suffered; but this corps would have amply sufficed for the defence of Sistova. The other five army corps will give an effective of 125,000 combatants, of which 40,000 might have been used for the defence of the Balkan passes and Tirnova, leaving 85,000 men who would have been concentrated against Plevna, and at that time would have sufficed to take it. Had the Turkish army at Shumla moved across the Jantra to attack the Russian army in the rear it would have been too late, for the Russians would have had time to crush Plevna, and then turn round and crush the Shumla Army in its turn on the open glacis west of the Jantra. Two hard-fought battles would have rapidly crushed both the Turkish armies in succession. There would then have been nothing but the army of Suleiman Pacha south of the Balkans to prevent the onward march, which the Russians could have easily undertaken with the reinforcements now arriving. The result of not adopting this plan will evidently be a second campaign, the winter passed in Bulgaria and the Balkans amidst snow and mud, and the loss by sickness of half the army, and the expenditure of millions.

August 23rd, Evening.—The cannonade heard to-day on our right wing does not seem to have been on the side of the Roumanians. I can only account for it in this way. Three or four days ago General Zotoff sent a strong detachment of cavalry round behind Plevna to reconnoitre the country, burn any stores that might fall into their hands, and destroy bridges and the telegraph. This detachment crossed the road between Loftcha and Plevna. It must be somewhere behind Plevna now, working round towards the right wing. This cavalry may have engaged the Turks somewhere, which would account for the cannonade we have heard.

Russian public feeling is showing itself very much dissatisfied with the military operations. The Russian papers, while admitting the courage of the soldiers generally, speak with contempt of their generals, and include them all in one universal condemnation.

It has been announced that the reconnaissance made by General Skobelev against Loftcha some days ago, an account of which I have already sent you by telegraph, was an attack in which Skobelev was repulsed with the loss of four hundred men. The fact is, the affair was merely a reconnaissance. Skobelev had orders not to attack under any circumstances, and his loss was five men killed and twenty five wounded. Skobelev reported that a division and a half would be required to take the place, whereas he had only five battalions and expected that orders would be given to take Loftcha. Indeed, this was the original intention of the Russian Commander in Chief, but a sudden spell of rainy weather caused delay in the attack, and when the roads became passable the offensive was taken up by the Turks everywhere. This induced the Russian Commander in Chief to postpone the attack upon Loftcha for the present. I may remark that in the great battle at Plevna Skobelev, who had the command of the extreme left wing, actually penetrated into the town and in spite of this fact was the only general who succeeded in carrying off all his wounded, not losing a single man.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FIGHTING IN THE SHIPKA PASS

Suleiman Pacha's Determined Attack—Hurried March of Russian Reinforce

Dragomiroff—Repulse of the Turks—Anxiety at Head Quarters—The *Armes de Camp* Outstripped—The Emperor and the Correspondent—A Turkish View of the Fighting

THE third Russian attack on Plevna, delayed by the slowness with which reinforcements arrived, was destined not to take place before a series of most determined attempts had been made by Suleiman Pacha, who commanded the Ottoman troops south of the Balkans, to break through the Russian

defences of the Shipka Pass. It was a serious question for the Russians whether, with the troops at their disposal, they could at the same time keep at bay the Shumla Army under Mehemet Ali Pacha, on their left, prepare a new assault upon Osman Pacha at Plevna, and resist the efforts of Suleiman Pacha in the Balkans. The following letter, the whole of which was transmitted by telegraph, describes a visit to the Shipka Pass and a hard-fought battle there, the cause of the abandonment of the tour round the Russian positions, of which a description was given in one of the letters comprised in the preceding chapter:—

* SHIPKA PASS, *August 24th*.—On the morning of the 22nd I was informed at the Imperial headquarters at Gorny Studen that Suleiman Pacha, with an army of forty battalions, having been foiled in an attempt to force the Hainkoi Pass, was now threatening the Shipka. Acting on the maxim given by Prince Frederick Charles to his officers, I at once rode in the direction of the cannon thunder.

In reality Suleiman Pacha had already on the 19th occupied the village of Shipka, and had commenced an attack on the 21st on the Russian positions at the head of the Pass. Fighting has lasted almost continually from then until now, and it is only about an hour ago that an apparently decisive result was obtained. I had been advised at headquarters to overtake the 2nd Division, commanded by Prince Imeretinski, which had been dispatched from Gorny Studen to strengthen the extremely weak force left in the redoubts of the Pass; but later I had learned that the division had been diverted to Selvi to fill the blank left there by the earlier march of the brigade of the 9th Division that had been in position there, to strengthen the Shipka garrison. The 2nd Division at Selvi will also be available for its share in the impending attack on the Plevna-Loftcha line still held by Osman Pacha. I also learned at Tirnova that General Radetzky, commanding the 8th Corps, and General Dragomiroff, commanding the 14th Division of that corps, had gone forward to Gabrova with hurriedly gathered reinforcements for the hard-pressed people in the Shipka Pass.

All the way from Tirnova to Gabrova the country was one vast melancholy encampment, and the road one continuous mournful procession of miserable fugitive families from Kezanlik and the villages on the southern slopes of the Balkans, where the Turks had regained their fell sway of rapine and murder

on the withdrawal of General Gourko's force. Most had fled so hurriedly as to have left everything behind, and the abject misery of the women of the better class in the squalid encampments is not to be described.

On the evening of the 23rd, near Gabrova, I overtook the Podolsk Regiment of the 2nd Brigade of the 14th Division. The Colonel told me that his regiment had been so hurriedly pressed forward that his men had not cooked or slept for two days and two nights, and he knew not when they would do either. For the last three days they had been there for
had been

the Turks continued to push their attacks with extraordinary pertinacity and determination. In the dead of night came rumbling over the stony streets long convoys of ambulance waggons laden with wounded men, and another of empty ammunition waggons, both indications of serious work the day before.

Before daylight this morning the sound of the renewed cannonade came down the passes, and along the quaint old street of Gabrova, where the townspeople collected in anxious groups, and whispered with pale lips. It had volumes of terrible significance for them, that sullen booming of cannon up in the Shipka there, not three hours' march from their doors. While the Russians stood their ground there the pale citizens were safe, but let them be worsted, and three short hours would see the leaders of the swarms of murderous Circassians riding down the old main street with its projecting fronts, and its resemblance to Cairo. For the Russians to be worsted meant letting loose a horde of savages on that vast aggregate of fugitives who were camped in every field, and beneath every tree, from Gabrova to Drenova. For the Bulgarians, then, each moment was an agony of suspense. Nor is it easy to realize how deeply the Russian chiefs must have felt the sense of responsibility weighing upon them. A leader may see his soldiers falling around him. They go down in fair fight. They die, so to speak, in the way of business, but to know that on their staunchness and skill hang the lives of countless women and tender babes must be terrible. Yet how glorious to realize and be equal to the burden of responsibility! I am sure the Russian soldiers fought none the less stoutly because for two days before they reached the scene of action they had been marching with pitying hearts and cheering words through the miserable fugitives cowering along their path. I saw the noble hearted fellows empty their havresacks of bread into the laps of the

starving Bulgarian women and children, although the act left themselves foodless, without a guess when they should eat next. I saw them with infinite patience groping into corners of recondite pockets, fish out the poor coppers which they had been saving for schnapps and tobacco, or perchance to take home to their young ones in the humble cabin in far-off Russia, and bestow them instead on the gaunt children of the fugitives, with some expression of rough jocularly which was but a cloak for a tear and a blessing.

Leaving Gabrova in the pale half-light of the moon and of the dawn, we made forward along the beautiful romantic valley of the Jantra, through beech forests interspersed with clearings around tiny villages. Here we passed a long column of Cossacks, each man with a led horse. These were the horses on which the advanced guard of the Rifle Brigade was hurried forward last night, reaching the ridge and coming into action just in the nick of time to avert a very serious, if not disastrous result. The roar of cannon high above us—it seemed in the very clouds—swelled louder and louder in volume as we drew nearer, and wounded men were already trickling to the rear, a sure sign that the fighting had been warm and close from its very commencement.

Suddenly the road left the Jantra valley, and bending sharp to the left, struck up the mountain side. There was no cessation in the steep ascent for about five kilometres. The road was extremely tortuous, having to twist, and turn, and wriggle to take advantage of any available ground. But although in places terribly steep it was quite practicable for vehicles, being broad and smooth. This is the road which the Russian pioneers have constructed during the Russian occupation, and so long as this road remains undestroyed, to cross the Balkans in peace time will be little greater exertion than to drive from Blairgowrie to Braemar. Patches of the old track remain. It must have been no road at all, but a simple avalanche of boulders hurled miscellaneously over fixed jagged rocks. About five kilometres from the bottom stands on the hill face a hut used by the Turks as custom-house and guard-house. It was on a knoll about this where the Russians of Mirsky's original advance first came into action against the Turks on a hillock higher up, on which stands a dismantled little khan. On that occasion the Grand Duke Nicholas the younger commanded a detachment. He is perhaps the most practical soldier, in his steady faith in the wisdom of getting to close quarters with the enemy, of all the many soldier members of the great Imperial House.

At the custom house we passed a provision train. At the Khan

was the dressing place of the third line, whither, after having had their wounds bound up in the field, came such soldiers as were able to walk. Although a steady evacuation further to the rear had been practised, this place and its vicinity were thronged with the severely wounded men, among whom was an extraordinary proportion of officers. Two colonels were brought in while I passed. The Shipka will be known as pre excellence the officers' battle of the war.

On my way to the scene of action, and while surveying it before following closely the movement of the troops engaged, I was much impressed by the peculiarity of the ground. The Shipka Pass is not a pass at all in the proper sense of the term. There is no gorge, no defile, there is no spot where 300 men could make a new Thermopylæ, no deep scored trench as in the Kyber Pass, where an army might be annihilated without coming to grips with its adversary. It has its name simply because at this point there happens to be a section of the Balkans of less than the average height, the surface of which, from the Jantra Valley on the north to the Tundja Valley on the south, is sufficiently continuous, although having an extremely broken and serrated contour, to afford a foothold for a practicable track, for the Balkans generally present a wild jumble of mountain and glen, neither having any continuity. Under such circumstances, such a crossing place as the Shipka Pass affords is a godsend, although under other circumstances a road over it would be regarded as impossible. What was a mere track is now a really good and practicable, although steep, high road. The ground on either side of the ridge is depressed sometimes into shallow hollows, sometimes into cavernous gorges, but these lateral depressions are broken, and have no continuity, otherwise they would clearly afford a better track for a road than the high ground above.

The highest peak is flanked on either side behind the lateral depressions by a mountainous spur higher than itself, and therefore commanding it, and having as well the command of the ridge behind. The higher one that is to say, the westmost of these two spurs can rake the road leading up to the Russian positions. These spurs break off abruptly and precipitously on their northern edge, and therefore afford no access into the valley north of the Balkans. Their sole use to the Turks, therefore, was in affording positions whence to flank the central Shipka ridge. It is possible also for troops

summit. This done, the Shipka position would of course be turned, but the advantage would be, of little avail till the road had been opened by carrying the fortified positions on it. Without the command of the road an enemy might indeed send bands down the road on to which he had scrambled, into the lower country about Gabrova, to burn and plunder, but I repeat that the road over the Shipka constitutes for an army the only practicable line of communication in this section of the Balkans.

Much has been said of the strength of the Shipka position. In these opinions I do not concur. It seems to me that unless strongly held with wide extending arms of defence, it is easy to be attacked and very difficult to be held with any security. The strength of a position does not depend wholly on its elevation or even on the difficulties of access to a direct attack, but on the clear range around it which its fire can sweep, and its ability to concentrate its fire on critical points. Herein lies the defect of the Shipka as a defensive position. It cannot search with its fire the jumble of lateral valleys and reverse slopes which hem it in. A brigade of light infantry might mass in a hollow within one hundred yards of the Russian first position without exposing itself to the artillery fire of that position.

The troops engaged in to-day's battle were as follows:—The Bulgarians and a regiment of the 1st Brigade of the 9th Division under General Stoletoff; the 2nd Brigade of the 9th Division, under General Derozinsky; the Rifle Brigade under General Tzwilzinski. The 2nd Brigade of the 14th Division, commanded by General Petroceni, arrived at nine in the morning, brought up by the commander of the division, General Dragomiroff, the whole force being under the chief command of General Radetzky, commanding the 8th Corps, which is composed of the 9th and 14th Divisions, in all twenty battalions, which if full would give an aggregate of about seventeen thousand men; but every regiment engaged had already fought, and lost. The Tirailleurs and Bulgarians shared the fortunes and misfortunes of General Gourko. The 14th Division fought hard in crossing the Danube. The stones of the Shipka had already been splashed with the blood of Mirsky's gallant fellows of the 9th Division. I set down the total strength as not above thirteen thousand.

The operations had commenced at daybreak. An attack was made on the Turkish commanding position on the Russian right flank, by the Tirailleur Brigade and the Brianski Regiment of the 9th Division. Almost at the same moment the Turks from that position renewed their turning effort,

extending their left with intent to push across the intervening deep valley and gain the top ridge of the ground in the rear of the Russian positions, and so hem in the Russian forces. These simultaneous attacks met in the valley separating the parallel ridges held by the Russians and Turks. The fighting became at once fierce and stubborn. I had been told about eight o'clock that in half an hour the Turks would be driven back. When I reached the crest of the Russian ridge I was forced to confess I saw no immediate prospect of this. A furious infantry fire was raging in the valley between our bare
barer
into

fire from their wooded slope, and by the shell fire of the mountain batteries on the summit. The Russian battery in the first position confronting the Turkish summit fired but at rare intervals. It is true it is waste of ammunition to shower shells into trees, but the Turkish battery on the sky line unquestionably afforded a mark, and it would have been worth while to throw a few shells to help to cover with their moral effect the advance of our infantry. I fancy there was a long period when the battery was short of ammunition. The road is so exposed that fetching ammunition was extremely dangerous. The Turks had detachments of marks men detailed with seemingly no other duty than to sweep the Russian road at the exposed points of its course, and, indeed, to
-body exposed on the Russian
to attain shelter from the rifle
fire

I went up on to the sky line once and sat down to study the interesting scene below, and my white cap cover in an instant drew fire from half a dozen rifles. We were all under rifle fire continually the whole day, from the commencement of the action till the Turkish position was finally carried. From staff officers who had been on the ground during the whole period of operations I received details of the forces engaged and the character of the fighting on the previous days.

The Turks began the attack on the 21st, pushing on directly up the steep above the village of Shipka. The Russian garrison in the works of the pass then consisted of the Bulgarian Legion and one regiment of the 9th Division, both weakened by previous hard fighting, and probably reckoning little more than three thousand bayonets, with about forty cannon. No supports were nearer than Tirnova, a distance of forty miles,—a grave omission. The garrison fought hard and hindered the Turks from gaining any material advantage.

though the latter forced the outer line of the Russian shelter trenches on the slopes below the position of Mount St. Nicholas, the highest peak of the Shipka crossing. The Russians had laid mines in front of their trenches, which were exploded just as the head of the Turkish assaulting parties were massed above them, and it is reported that a large number of Moslems were blown up into the air in fragments. The loss to the Russians on the first day's attack was but two hundred, chiefly of the Bulgarian Legion. On the second day, the 22nd, the fighting was not heavy, the Turks being engaged in making a wide turning movement on the right and left flanks of the Russian position, and these attacks were next day developed with great fierceness and pertinacity.

Yesterday the Turks assailed the Russian position on the front and flanks, and drove in the defenders from their outlying ground. The radical defects of the position became painfully apparent—its narrowness, its exposure, its liability to be outflanked and isolated. Fortunately reinforcements had arrived, which averted the mischief which had otherwise, to my thinking, imminently impended. Stoletoff hit his hardest, and a right good fighting man he is, full of energy and force after four long days of intense mental and physical strain; but he could not perform impossibilities with thirty thousand men thundering on his front and flanks. But there had come to him, swiftly marching from Selvi, a brigade of the 9th Division, commanded by another valiant soldier, General Derozinski, and this timely succour had been of material value to Stoletoff. The fight lasted all day, and at length, as the sun grew lower, the Turks had so worked round on both the Russian flanks that it seemed as though the claws of the crab were about momentarily to close behind the Russians, and that the Turkish columns climbing either face of the Russian ridge would give a hand to each other on the road in the rear of the Russian position.

The moment was dramatic with an intensity to which the tameness of civilian life can furnish no parallel. The two Russian generals, expecting momentarily to be environed, had sent, between the closing claws of the crab, a last telegram to the Czar, telling what they expected, how they had tried to prevent it, and how that, please God, driven into their positions and beset, they would hold these till reinforcements should arrive. At all events, they and their men would hold their ground to the last drop of their blood.

It was six o'clock; there was a lull in the fighting, of which the Russians could take no advantage, since the reserves were all

rifle fire was coming from two quarters simultaneously. So the infantry were stowed away till wanted in the ditch of the redoubt. Radetzky and his staff remained on the slope of the peak, and here Dragomiroff joined, and was welcomed by his chief.

The firing in the valley waxed and waned fitfully as the morning wore on to near noon. The Turks were very strongly established in their wooded position, and there was an evident intention on their part to work round their left and edge in across the narrowed throat of the valley towards our rear. About eleven the firing in the valley swelled in volume. It was almost wholly musketry fire, be it remembered. Taking off my white hat I crept up to the edge of the ridge and looked down upon the scene below. The Russians had their tirailleurs in among the trees of the Turkish slope, leaving the bare ground behind strewn with killed and wounded. The ambulance men were behaving admirably, picking up the wounded under the hottest fire, and indeed not a few were themselves among the wounded. As to the progress of the Russians in the wood little could be seen, the cover was so thick, but it was clear that the battle waged to and fro, now the Russians, now the Turks, gaining ground. Occasionally the Russians at some point would be hurled clean back out of the wood altogether, and with my glass I could mark the Turks following them eagerly to its edge, and lying down while pouring out a galling fire. It seemed an even match, the Turks and Russians alike accepted valiantly the chances of battle. The Russian tirailleurs, finely trained skirmishers, looked out dexterously for cover, and the Turks displayed fine skirmishing ability, but

proportion of casualties

There is something terrible in a fight in a wood. You can see nothing save an occasional flash of dark colour among the sombre foliage, and the white clouds of smoke rising above it like soap bubbles. Hoarse cries come back to you on the wind from out the mysterious inferno. How is it to go? Are the strong backed Muscovites, with these ready bayonet points of theirs, to end the long drawn out fight with one short, impetuous, irresistible rush, or are the more lissom Turks to drive their northern adversaries out of the wood backwards into the fire blistered open? Who can tell? The fire rages still. The mad clamour of the battle still surges

A FIG

up around into the serene blue heavens. Wounded men come staggering out from among the swarthy trunks and sit down in a heap, or crawl on to the ambulance men. I leave the edge of the ridge soon after eleven, and pick my way up towards the peak, on the slope of which the generals and staff are surveying the scene. The bullets here are singing like a nest of angry wasps. One bullet strikes on the right knee General Dragomirov, who has been standing calmly in the face of the fire, looking down upon the battle. One of the best generals in the Russian army is *hors de combat*. He is as brave as he is skilful. We have borne him into comparative spectacles off, but when he, and, ripping up his trouser-leg, shelter quietly sits down upon the wound. Surgeons gather round him; but, like the true soldier he is, he says he will take his turn when his boot removed, and the limb bandaged. Then he is placed on a stretcher, and is borne away. The last words on the soldier's lips are a fervent wish for good fortune to the norms of the Czar.

The Tirailleurs and Brianskise Regiment were not making headway in their difficult enterprise of attacking direct in front the steep Turkish slope, with its advantage of wooded cover, although they have foiled the efforts of the Turks to work round by their own left flank. We can see on the sky-line the Turkish reinforcements as they come up out of the valley by the road close to their left flank. It is determined at twelve o'clock to deliver a counter flank attack on the right edge of the Turkish ridge, simultaneously with a renewed strenuous attack of the Tons of the Jitomer Regiment, each below. The two battalions behind as supports, emerge from the leaving one company peak of the Russian first position, and partial shelter of the pines across the more level grass land march in company column down the evening valley. They have no great dip to traverse, and the intervening way is good marching ground, but the Turkish mountain position, are ready for them, as also is the Turkish flank position, are ready for them, wooded peak of the Tianshan on the Turkish right edge of the ridge. The fire sweeps through them, and many a gallant fellow dyes the grass with his blood. But the battalions press steadily on, and do their best to prepare the way, for Russian artillery had already fired hard while they were their battery on the reserve battery near the khan down crossing over, and a re

days, when they were attacked, they must have suffered heavily

During the fighting I spent some time with the surgeons working in the most advanced positions, and should like to bear testimony to their admirable devotion to duty and their skilled dexterity. In their eagerness to assist the wounded the Russian surgeons somehow neglect the axiom that their quarters should be in a sheltered spot, but indeed on all the ridge it was hard to find a sheltered spot. The Turkish bullets whistled over and through the little group. Indeed, one patient received a fresh wound while the earlier one was being dressed, but the surgeons pursued their duties with a noble courage and disregard of risk. Their kind attention to the wounded and their attention to trifles—such as supplying water, laving burning faces, and administering restoratives—filled me with admiration. As I leave the position at six o'clock comparative quietude reigns

* RUSSIAN HEADQUARTERS, GORNY STUDEV, *August 25th*—Riding backward from Shipka through the night, I passed masses of reinforcements artillery and infantry, hurrying forward to Shipka. It would be improper to specify their strength but it is such as ought to secure the safety of the all important position. Riding hard all night long and to day also without either rest or food, I was fortunate enough to reach the headquarters here in advance of any of the aides de camp whom the Grand Duke had sent to the fighting region to report the progress of events. All news previously reaching the headquarters had come by telegraph and chiefs hard pressed by fighting functions, have no leisure to telegraph copiously.

Having communicated some details to the officers of my acquaintance on the Imperial staff, General Ignatieff acquainted the Emperor with my arrival and His Majesty did me the honour to desire that he should hear what I had to tell from my own lips. The concern of the Emperor was not less strongly evinced than was his thorough conversance with the military art, and the promptitude with which he comprehended my details was more, I fear, owing to the trained skill of his perception than to my lucidity. He expressed an anxious desire that every effort should be made to supply his noble soldiers with the food they so much needed, and expressed great interest in the progress of the campaign. I had seen camp bullets cent at a glance. He carries no luxury with him, and I have seen a

subaltern's tent at Wimbledon far more sumptuously accoutred than the campaigning residence of the Czar of All the Russias. His Majesty desired that, on leaving him, I should go to his brother, the Grand Duke commanding-in-chief.

Answering the questions of His Imperial Highness was like going through a competitive examination. He was fully master of the subject, and if I had not taken pains in gathering my facts from a wide area, I should have felt extremely foolish. As it was, I was able to draw for the Grand Duke a plan of the operations, and to illustrate my unskilful draughtsmanship by verbal explanations which I trust His Imperial Highness found of some value. He had received telegrams to-day from General Radetzky to the effect that, as I had anticipated, the Turks had renewed the combat with great energy this morning, and that hard fighting was raging, the flanks as well as the front being threatened.

I expected no less; but none the less do I hold to my impression that Radetzky, having so far widened his area to the right and left yesterday as to prevent the dominance thence of the Shipka position, will be able now to hold his ground against all comers, especially with the reinforcements arriving. I take it for granted that he utilized last night by making such dispositions as shall prevent the Turks from regaining the positions from which he yesterday drove them. It is a military axiom that it is easier to hold a position than to carry it. The Grand Duke had received a telegram that General Petroceni, the gallant chief of the 2nd Brigade, 14th Division, was this morning in action. Another telegram from Gabrova from General Stoletoff told that General Radetzky had ordered that fine officer to take his Bulgarians down into Gabrova for a little rest after five days' continuous fighting, with no food save dry bread. It is a good sign that they can be spared. The Bulgarian Legion has proved that the despised Bulgarians can fight like lions.

* BUCHAREST, *August 26th*.—Information follows me here that the fighting at the Shipka Pass is still raging, having been again renewed to-day, but that Radetzky continues to hold his own. It is now a question of endurance, and the Turks may add to the difficulties of the Russian position by taking the offensive on the left and right flanks. Indeed, Mehemet Ali Pacha has already been striking out against the Czarewitch; but I adhere to my impression that the Shipka Pass, as now held by Radetzky, is safe, and that unless Suleiman Pacha can run a column through another pass, regarding the practicability or the contrary of which I know

nothing, he will wreck his army by thus dashing it continually against the rock of Shipka

The subjoined letter dated a day later than that commencing on page 407, is from another Correspondent who arrived subsequently to the departure of the writer of the previous despatch —

† SHIPKA PASS *August 25th* —The fight is still raging here with unabated fury. The arrival of Radetzky with reinforcements saved the situation for the moment and drove back the Turks who were on the point of seizing the Pass but the Russian position is still most critical. The Turks had not only turned both the Russian flanks by seizing Berdek on the left and the mountains on the right but had constructed a redoubt and planted a battery on the right which commands the road leading up to the Pass. This gives them possession of the ridge running parallel to that up which the road winds one thousand five hundred yards distant as the crow flies. The redoubt enfilades the road in several places and the Turkish infantry, by extending along this ridge which is thickly wooded can practically render the road impassable.

How true this is may be judged by the fact that it was on this road that General Dragomiroff was wounded and that to day General Petrocen, the commander of the 1st Brigade of the 9th Division of the 8th Corps was killed on this road fully a mile on our side of the summit of the Pass by a bullet which traversed his lungs killing him almost instantly. Men are picked off by the Turkish skirmishers two miles behind the Pass where the road is exposed and even where the road passes on the other side of the ridge the men are killed and wounded by the bullets dropping over from random firing. Men are killed and wounded all round the point where I found Radetzky and his staff to day although sheltered behind the brow of the ridge which rose thirty to fifty feet above them. It will be seen therefore that the Russian position still remains most critical in spite of the arrival of reinforcements. General Radetzky indeed informed the commandant of Gabrova the day after his arrival that he had better warn the inhabitants to be ready to fly at a moment's notice. The fact is that until the Turkish redoubt spoken of is taken it is impossible to say what will be the result of the Turkish attack on the Shipka Pass. The road up to the Shipka would have already been rendered impassable but for the fact that the Turks have been so busy defending the redoubt that

they have not yet had time to turn it to its proper use by shelling the Shipka road from the battery at the foot.

General Radetzky had no sooner arrived than he began making dispositions in earnest. From the highest point of the Pass there is a high short narrow ridge extending to the right at nearly right angles to the road. At a distance of half a mile it rises into a sharp peak, which is crowned by a Russian redoubt, effectually protecting the Russian batteries from that side. Half a mile farther, or perhaps less, the ridge rises into another peak, which, with the first one, forms a perfect saddle-back. This peak is crowned by the Turkish redoubt, already spoken of, and it is the head of the ridge mentioned which curves round on our right until parallel with the road, thus enabling the Turkish infantry to command it.

The Russian commander should have occupied this second peak, and would undoubtedly have done so had he had enough men, but he only had one regiment, three thousand men, and the débris of the Bulgarian Legion—only enough to defend the direct approaches to the Pass. It is true that another regiment was sent from Selvi to reinforce him as soon as it was known that the Turks were preparing to attack, but it was then too late, as the Turks seem to have occupied this position the first day. Besides, it was soon demonstrated that two regiments were required to protect the direct approaches against Suleiman's violent onset.

The two peaks occupied by the Russian and Turkish redoubts are thickly wooded, as well as the connecting ridge between. General Radetzky advanced his troops along this ridge under cover of the woods, and opened fire on the redoubt with two or three batteries. He at the same time sent troops across the deep hollow from the road to take the Turkish redoubt on the Gabrova side, by advancing up the steep mountain flank. Soon a terrible musketry-fire told that the troops were in contact, and the attack fairly begun; and for hours the mountains re-echoed with the continuous roll of musketry and the thunder of cannon.

The Russians advanced like Indians under cover of the trees, which were, however, too small to afford good shelter, firing as they went. In a short time they had reached within fifty yards of the redoubt. Here they found obstacles which for the moment were quite insurmountable. The Turks had cut down the trees around the redoubt, making an abattis over which the Russians found it almost impossible to pass. They gathered around the edge under cover of the trees, and suddenly made a rush for it, but were driven back with fearful loss. The soldiers became entangled in the masses of brush-

wood, trunks, and limbs of the trees over which they were obliged to scramble, while the Turks poured in a terrible fire upon them at this short distance, and mowed them down like grass. Of the first assault launched against the redoubt I am afraid very few got back under cover to tell the tale. It was very evident that the assault under such conditions could not succeed. Only one battalion had been sent to attack. The force was insufficient, and of this one company sent to the assault was nearly destroyed. Reinforcements were sent by Radetzky. The attack began again, but dispositions were made to place a large force in such positions that it could pour a heavy fire into the redoubt to cover the assault until the assaulters were almost up to the parapet.

This attack seemed almost on the point of success for the colonel in command, whose name I forget said that if reserves were given to him he could take it. The officer in command of the reserves let them go, but they were nevertheless repulsed. Then Radetzky mounted and rode to the ground, followed by part of his staff. The chief of the staff General Dmitriofsky, on foot, bareheaded, and supported by two men, with an expression of extreme suffering on his face had put himself at the head of a battalion to lead the assault. A shell had struck the ground beside him, covering him with earth, knocking him down and rendering him senseless for a few minutes. The attack still went on. The fire became terrible. From among the trees rose a large column of smoke, marking the place of the Turkish redoubt, which was dimly seen through it, while the thick woods were full of the roll of the Russian musketry fire.

The Russians advanced steadily. They rushed over, or through, the abattis, they even got into the battery and actually held it for a few seconds, but were driven out again. They surrounded the place on all sides pouring into it a terrible fire, but were again driven back. In the meantime the Turks to support the defence began to attack in front and rear. Musketry and artillery were heard coming up from towards Shipka mingling with the nearer din around the redoubt in a most sinister way. The wounded came trooping steadily back with wounds in their heads, arms and bodies. Some were on litters. One was carried by his companions. Some were limping along by themselves, presenting a most pitiable spectacle covered with dust, smoke begrimed, haggard, wretched. I don't know yet what are the losses but they must be very heavy, for the fight continued until late at night. The wounded were coming back steadily all the time. Besides these were the poor fellows, too severely wounded to

be moved, who will probably fall into the hands of the Turks, to be murdered, tortured, and mutilated.

To sum up, the attack has been unsuccessful. Reinforcements are arriving, and the fight will probably be continued to-morrow.

* SISTOVA, *August 27th*.—Fighting is still going on upon the flanks of the Shipka Pass positions, but Radetzky continues to maintain his ground, although his losses are serious.

If I remember rightly, Richie Moniplies, in the "Fortunes of Nigel," tore his cloak in his endeavours to conceal the rents in his clothing covered by that garment. That is what has very nearly happened to the Russians. The military leaders, in their early burst of success, gained possession of a certain area of Bulgaria. To that area they have clung pertinaciously. They had only so many men to hold the ground in Bulgaria pending the arrival of reinforcements, rendered necessary by the unexpected development of the Turkish fighting strength, and these they have disposed round the edge of the area occupied after the manner of a fence. Now the strength of the fence is only equal to the weakest portion of it, and realizing this, and dreading Turkish attacks from right and left on Tirnova, they kept thereabouts a body of troops belonging to the 8th Corps, available to strengthen any weak position that might be threatened. There was reason in this, but it was a very dangerous experiment to leave a handful of men to hold the all-important Shipka position beyond easy hailing distance of support. When Suleiman Pacha took the village of Shipka there was not a Russian soldier between the handful on the exposed Shipka position and Tirnova, forty miles away. Reinforcements arrived in the nick of time, but, as explained in my telegram, the safety of the Shipka position was an affair of minutes, and if the Turks had struck all round the Russian area simultaneously, either the Shipka position must have been left to its fate, or some other section of the fence line must have been seriously endangered.

I think it would have been better policy if the principle of protecting the area once occupied had been abandoned, and the idea of using the Russian forces as a palisade had been abandoned also. They should have been concentrated into one or two central positions, say one strong army at Gorny Studen, another at Tirnova, with a strong detachment thrown forward into Gabrova to answer the menace of the Shipka Pass position. A mobile army at Gorny Studen could have struck right or left at the Turkish forces showing themselves in the open, just as in 1814 Napoleon struck out at Schwarzenberg and Blucher. The aim of the Russian army

ought not to be to hem the Turkish armies in defensive positions, but to tempt them to adventure into the open, and then in pitched battles conquer them, in accordance with the invariable precedent. I think, however, that the crisis is virtually past, for let us hope that tinkering tactics have been abandoned. The arrival of reinforcements, now flowing in in a steady stream, should enable the Grand Duke to breathe more freely.

I hold to my conviction that the Shipka is safe, and that thus is defeated the great strategic scheme of the Turkish leaders to hem the Russians within the large *tête de pont* in Bulgaria with the ultimate intent of driving them over the Danube. How narrow was the escape of the Shipka need not be now closely inquired into, nor what would have been the consequences if the Russians had lost their hold of that critically important point. The next few days will be full of interest. These past I shall expect the Russians to take the initiative in a series of offensive operations on both flanks and so relieve them

done so, pursue

ur of the Turkish

uke to rely with

greater confidence on the unquestionable excellence of his troops as acting fighting men not alone as mere pieces of palisading and to pursue a bold and vigorous line of action even at some risk. The Balkan passes need not be held by strong garrisons if troops are maintained within easy hail, say at Gabrova to ensure the safety of the Shipka, at Elena to do the same office by the Hamkori. The role of invader is vigorous offensive action, not inactive defence. The spirit and condition of the Russian soldiers are high and satisfactory. They may be relied on to fight a good fight. Let them have their innings.

General Dragomiroff has telegraphed to the Emperor that in six weeks he expects to be fit for duty again.

Colonel Wellesley returns to the Imperial headquarters to day.

* GABROVA, August 31st.—This day week I despatched you a telegram describing the long and obdurate fighting in the Shipka Pass up to that date, the 24th instant, and said that the Turks would certainly renew strenuously their effort to attain the object for which Süleiman Pacha had already expended so much blood. I nevertheless was impressed with the conviction that Radetzky firmly held the position. So strong was that conviction, that I thought the circumstance justified me in quitting the scene of action for the purpose of reaching the telegraph base.

It was a serious thing for a Military Correspondent to adventure such a prediction while as yet the fighting zeal of the Turks remained unbroken, and in making it I was conscious of the responsibility I incurred to your readers. Since the despatch of my message I have reason to believe that telegrams, giving quite another colour to the course of events, have been transmitted to England, but never in my experience have sensational telegrams availed to alter stern facts. I have to-day visited the Shipka Pass to find my prediction amply verified. All is now quiet there. Radetzky has been left in comparative peace ever since the desperate fighting of Saturday last. So far from his position being impinged on it has been extended. There are no Turks now on his left. The wooded mountain on his right wing, which he cleared of the Turks on the 24th, he had to quit for want of water, and the Turks came back. But now again the Turks have abandoned that position, and solitude reigns among the trees under which furious fighting raged. You may walk along the road from the khan in the rear of Radetzky's position right along to the final peak of the Balkans on Mount St. Nicholas, and thence down into the shelter-trenches, without once hearing the whistle of a bullet, where once the air vibrated with the hum of them.

The truth is that Suleiman Pacha has had enough for the time of the Shipka Pass. For five days he beat out the brains of his gallant stubborn soldiers against its defences and its defenders. Let no man after Shipka venture to assert that the Turkish soldiers are only good men behind earthworks. I respect a fine soldier wherever I find him, be he Greek or Jew, Gentile or Barbarian, and the irrepressible dash and obdurate indomitable valour of the Turkish troops, in assaulting day after day this Shipka position, may claim to rank with any evidence of soldierhood with which I am acquainted. But their valour proved unavailing. Suleiman Pacha has abandoned the attempt, and marched away from the neighbourhood of Shipka. Some say that he is still in Kezanlik; others that he is searching for another pass. My own belief is that he is engaged in trying to re-organize his shattered forces. Five thousand Turkish corpses fester in the blazing sunshine between the Shipka village and the fringes of Mount St. Nicholas. All his Montenegrin soldiers have been removed. There remain still formally confronting the Russians a few battalions of Egyptians, with some cannon on the heights, and a few more miscellaneous battalions in Shipka.

The Imperial and Grand Ducal headquarters were singularly

pessimist "The Shipka smells very bad," was a remark made to me in several quarters as I passed the day before yesterday. But yesterday, between here and Drenova, I met General Nepokoitchitsky on his way back to Gorny Studen. He had come to choose new positions—an ominous errand, but he found the old ones available and satisfactory, and went back relieved.

This morning had been h
Shipka to

march back whence they came. The tendency of the Russian military authorities is always to extremes. The danger the Russian fortunes underwent at the Shipka Pass, owing almost wholly to the folly of leaving unsupported a handful of men to hold that Pass, was so great that when the storm burst and the peril was realized, every available man, down to the brigade guarding the Emperor, was hurried pell mell towards the position where there was only standing room for a limited number of men. The 2nd Division has to day returned whence it came. It is the same with the detachment of the 11th Division. Radetzky still has all the 14th Division, a brigade of the 9th Division, the Tirailleurs, the Bulgarians, and a detachment of foot Cossacks, with strong artillery, to hold the Pass against all comers.

It is not a pleasant position. All the water is brought from a spring near the foot of the ascent. For lack of wood most of the cooking is done down by the Jantra, and the food is brought up in great kettles. The effluvium from the unburied dead and the unsanitary camp taints the freshness of the mountain atmosphere. All the troops bivouac. Radetzky inhabits a domicile which is a place between a bower and a cavern. He says that the Turks made upwards of one hundred distinct attacks. God willing, says the stout old chief, he can and will stay there, come Turk or devil, till he gets relieved. The Russian loss during the fighting is set down at eight hundred killed and two thousand eight hundred and odd wounded. The figures are official. I should have thought the number considerably greater.

Now that this danger is averted, it behoves the Russians to do something more than merely move their troops to and fro to block the Turkish onslaughts. For the assailed, the policy of passive defence is a foolish and fatal policy, but it is simply the *reductio ad absurdum* of an invasion, nor is it probable that the Turks for their part, although they have not been successful at the Shipka, will fall in with a prolonged period of mutual inactivity.

The following letter describing the fighting in the Shipka Pass is from the Correspondent with the Turks :—

◊ ADRIANOPLE, *August 26th*.—The Shipka Pass is being most obstinately defended, and, notwithstanding the utmost bravery which Suleiman Pacha's troops have shown, victory as yet has been withheld, although on one occasion it has been almost within his grasp. His bold method of pushing his enemy hard after striking a blow, instead of losing half its value by pausing to recover himself, has brought him at one bound, as it were, to within 500 yards of the Russians. The Balkan road runs through the village of Shipka (now almost burnt to the ground), and creeps along and along the bare mountain, on the summit of which is the chief Russian position. The highest point nearest this, as well as every ridge before reaching it, is thickly entrenched by the Turks, and it will be impossible for an enemy of ten times his strength to attempt to make a descent. The mountains to the right and left, both of which are wooded, and form excellent cover to the attacking parties, have batteries established upon them, altogether numbering sixteen guns ; those on the right (three batteries), being of higher elevation, effectually command the Russian side before them, where the Balkan road runs at their feet. The left has not such an advantage, and the ascent from the bottom of the defile is exceedingly precipitous, and almost inaccessible.

On Thursday and Friday last the severest fighting which Suleiman's army has had occurred—the first day's fighting being on the right—and towards the close of the day the Russians were actually forced to beat a retreat, and the Turks gained momentary possession of a trench. By some strange error they were not properly supported, and had in their turn to retire, to the intense mortification of their commander, who, it is said, had fully determined that the battle should be won before the day closed. On Friday a change of tactics occurred, and the firing was entirely on the left, and went briskly on the whole day, without any advantage, however, excepting the loss it has inflicted on the already weakened garrison. Your Correspondent on the other side will doubtless have given you correct information of the numerical strength of the Russians before us. We hear they do not exceed 7,000 men, with twelve or sixteen guns, but these are all heavy Krupps, whilst we have only at present brought up sixteen mountain pieces. Suleiman's army is variously estimated at from 30,000 to 50,000 men—a happy medium may or may not represent the correct figures. Who knows ? I doubt if the

general himself could say, in its present condition, with fighting going on vigorously on all sides, and a large extent of country to defend. An army more suited to the task before it, or a general more fitted to the command in mountain war fire, there could not be.

The telegraph will have informed you whether the Muscovite is still master of the Balkans, if not, he will have a hard time of it on the other side, for Osman Pacha is not far distant. As to the poor peasantry, God help them! Those on our side are in a pitiable state, but how much worse must they be if the Turks descend upon them. It must not be supposed that the Russians, even if they lost their position on the stony ridge above referred to, could not hold those adjoining, although at a lower elevation, still, they are regular forts, and will stand a very strong attack. By threatening to cut off their retreat we may—should the first position fall—hear of surrender, but unless the Russian general is extremely unfortunate, he will make a hard fight until ample reinforcements arrive.

The entire Turkish system of care for the wounded is in a most lamentable state, and were it not for the English doctors, the condition of things would be incredible, hundreds of wounded, even as it is, have to shift for themselves, whilst the English ambulance is crowded with the poor soldiers in dreadful suffering, waiting their turn for relief. In the hospital, or rather houses, of Kezanlık, there are at this moment no less than 800 wounded left to the care of two Turkish surgeons.

August 26th—Matters looked rather differently in Suleiman's camp on Saturday. A lull in the din of battle had taken place, that hot, drowsy morning, and for a few hours the unwonted silence was almost unbroken, occasional shells only being exchanged as mere matters of courtesy. Just when the general himself, and not a few of his soldiers, were snatching a welcome doze on the plain at the Pass foot, the whirr of a shell aimed near headquarters broke the pleasant stillness. As if to prove there was no mistake about it, another and another fell, but this time aimed apparently directly at a long train of covered bullock waggons toiling slowly across the plain, freighted with the wounded from the left Turkish position, where their losses had been particularly heavy. A white flag with the crescent was carried at the head of this sad procession, but justice must be done to the Russians on this occasion against wilfully firing on it, for the small size of the flag prevented its being easily distinguishable at the distance from which they fired, their batteries on the main

Balkan road to the spot in question being not much less than 4,000 yards off. Two bullock waggons were broken by the frantic efforts of the drivers to get away. The shelling went on even after the string of waggons had passed from view at such a pace as few bullocks ever went before. The Russians could hardly have seen the fall of their shells, owing to the proximity of the foot of the mountain, and it may charitably be supposed that they imagined some battalions of troops were massed at the place in reserve.

It transpired afterwards that the Turkish troops on the left had met with a check, and had retired precipitately from a position which they had succeeded in occupying, and the Russians, wishing, no doubt, to make the most of the occasion, had lost no time in endeavouring to increase what threatened to be a panic with their foe on this side. Suleiman awoke to the sense of danger, and promptly ordered three batteries of his heaviest field artillery and three battalions of troops to form line across the plain at the mouth of the Pass, so as to ensure the Russians a warm reception if they should have had the temerity to advance. His precautions were well taken, and he has since continued them as a precautionary measure against any contingency.

The English Societies of the Red Crescent have established themselves in conjunction with one of the Turkish ambulances and the Surgeon-in-Chief of the army, on the roadside, in a shady place, with a clear stream of water running beside it, and 5,000 yards from the nearest Russian battery. The number of wounded increases daily, and by an arrangement easy to understand, the Turkish surgeons have taken in hand the slighter cases, leaving the heavier ones and amputations entirely to their English *confièrès*. A Turkish officer of rank was dangerously wounded a day or two since, and instantly placed himself under the care of the Englishmen in preference to his own countrymen. The fact is worth noting, and is by no means an isolated instance of the same kind. The opinion of Dr. Leslie Hume and Dr. Sandwith, who are in charge (Dr. Attwood doing good service in directing the hospital arrangements at Adrianople), from the numbers passing through their hands, from those whose wounds are dressed in other quarters, and from what they can learn, is that there have been at least 6,000 killed and wounded up to the afternoon of the 26th—a heavy price to pay for the positions gained, but as nothing in comparison to the importance of establishing the foothold he has obtained from which to drive out the Russians. The enemy's losses cannot fall far short of the same total.

as that of the heaviest and most prolonged of any previous fighting. It commenced at nine o'clock with a sharp rifle fire on the Turkish left, and proved to be a night attack by the Russians on a battery which had been effecting great damage in the trenches on the face of the main Russian centre or rock position. The flash of the Turkish rifles as they met the ascending Russians could be easily distinguished, sparkling through the trees, from the plain, and their vividness and frequency showed only too well how hotly the contest was proceeding. Hour after hour passed thus with varying success, and it was not until six in the morning that silence reigned again, and the news circulated throughout the camp that severe as had been the Russian attempt, it had been resolutely held at bay, and by a greatly inferior numerical force, without the advantage which the Russians had of drawing upon their immediate reserves to an almost unlimited extent. The losses on both sides must have been enormous, for the firing did not cease for one moment in its violence throughout the night. The Turkish loss was heavier, owing to a sad error in the regular troops imagining, in the obscurity of the night, that the dismounted Circassians and Bashi Bazouks were Russians, a mistake natural enough as regards the former, excepting that they are not always to be met with in the front, at least when fighting is going on, in their turn they fired into the regulars also.

It is subject of remark that during the whole night the Turkish batteries on the right did absolutely nothing to help matters by way of diversion as they might easily have done by shelling the Russian batteries in the front and such of their enemy's troops as were within range. The position was held unsupported, and the glory of its defence is alone due to its own scanty battalions, and their slight reserves. With the heavy losses which Suleiman's army has now sustained, and notwithstanding the admirable manner in which they fight, it is somewhat doubtful if any general attack will be made for a few days. The Russians, with their telegraphic communications open from the positions themselves to their main body, can call up as they evidently have already been compelled to do, any amount of reinforcements on the instant, whereas those of the Turks are far behind.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE THIRD ATTACK ON PLEVNA.

Sortie by Osman Pacha in Force—Capture of Loftcha by Imeretinsky and Skobelev—Dispositions for the Attack on Plevna—The Four Days' Cannonade—The Infantry Attack—The Mameleon Redoubt South-East of Plevna—Gallant Advance of the Russians—Arrival of Turkish Reinforcements—Repulse of the Russians—Turkish Attack on the Radisovo Ridge—Counter Attack by Kriidener and Kriloff and its Repulse—Skobelev's Attack on the Double Redoubt on the Loftcha Road—Capture of the Redoubt—Six Turkish Attacks for its Recovery—The Redoubt Recaptured—Skobelev returning from the Battle—Capture of the Grivica Redoubt by the Roumanians—General Failure of the Third Russian Attack on Plevna.

By the end of the month of August the Russians were looking forward to a new attack on Plevna as an event near at hand. Their preparations, however, were not completed, and on the last day of that month Osman Pacha anticipated the blow by making a sortie in considerable force against the Russian positions. He was repulsed with loss. Four days afterwards the Russians gained an important success by wresting the town of Loftcha from the Turks. The long-expected attack on Plevna was commenced on the 7th of September by a cannonade, and was succeeded on the 11th by the infantry assault by which the Russians hoped to restore the fortunes of the campaign. The following letter gives a summary view of military affairs at the end of August:—

* GORNY STUDEN, *September 1st.*—Following upon his recent short visit to the Imperial headquarters here, Prince Charles of Roumania has been appointed to the chief command of the Russo-Roumanian Army before Plevna. General Zotoff takes the post of second in command. Yesterday Osman Pacha inaugurated the new appointment by assuming the offensive, and directed a serious and well-sustained attack against the Russian left centre, almost directly in front of Poradim.

At six o'clock in the morning a large force of Turkish cavalry advanced beyond the Turkish foreposts between Radisovo and Grivica, and drove in the Russian advanced posts on the line between the villages of Pelisat and Sgalince. This done,

at eight o'clock the Turkish leader developed a regular attack in force in a direction already prepared by his cavalry. The Turkish infantry engaged were estimated by the Russians at 25,000 men, with more than a proportionate quantity of artillery. The Russian force engaged consisted of three regiments of the 16th Division, which was not engaged in the previous Plevna battle, and two battalions of the 30th Division in reserve, which division took part in the battle of the 30th July. The Uhlans and Hussars of the 4th Cavalry Division arrived in time to be of some service.

The Turkish attack was in some degree a surprise. General Zotoff was away from Poradim, making a formal visit to Prince Charles, and in his absence nobody was in a position to make comprehensive dispositions, but he returned in time to take the direction of affairs before the fighting was over. It was stubborn, and in places desperate. The village of Sgalince, and the hollow near it, the weak point in the Russian defence, four times changed hands, but they are stated to have ultimately remained in possession of the Russians. The Turkish attack then was thus far repulsed, but the previous forepost line of the Russians was not wholly recovered, and the Turks have thus established an indentation on the semicircle of the Russian environment. The Russians state their loss in the day's fighting at 800 killed and wounded, which figures indicate the seriousness of the affair.

To-day the Turks are reported to be remaining quiet. There is every indication that within the next few days the Plevna district will be the scene of momentous events. If Osman Pacha is working on a plan, a strong blow at the Russian centre, such as that delivered yesterday, can have no other result than to precipitate the long postponed crisis. I may mention a curious belief current among the less well informed officers of the Russian army, that Osman Pacha is no other than Marshal Bazaine.

The return of the 2nd Division from the reserve position behind the Shipka to Selvi was very opportune. Yesterday there was lively work on the Russian left flank also. Early in the morning a Turkish force, consisting, according to the Russian reports, of eight battalions of infantry and four squadrons of cavalry, advanced from Rustchuk to the village of Kadikoi, between the Black and White Loms, and the scene of previous fighting detailed in my letters from the Rustchuk army. Kadikoi was occupied only by a Cossack regiment of the 12th Division, which withdrew in the face of superior force, and the Turks occupied it. Later in the day, however, they were attacked by the Ukraine infantry regiment of the

12th Division, which, the Archduke Vladimir reports, drove them out and forced them to retire under the guns of the Rustchuk position.

Commencing on Thursday, and continuing yesterday, there was general fighting along the front of the centre and right flank army of the Czarewitch from Nisova on the White Lom southward over Solenik, Gagovo, Sultankoi, Popkoi, Mehemedkoi, and beyond, in front of Osman Bazar. Here it is believed Mehemet Ali Pacha was personally in command. Great masses of Turks everywhere drove in the Russian fore-post line. An important battle is imminent, but the tactics of the Turks resemble those of the combatants in the American civil war. When they gain any ground they sit and fortify themselves in it by entrenchments before moving to acquire any more. There is obvious caution in this policy. The Russians have abandoned the Popkoi position, after having entrenched themselves in it. The reason is stated to be the discovery of its ineligibility as being commanded by higher ground within cannon range. The new position is behind the old one. I have not learned whether the Turks have occupied the Popkoi position. A parlementaire from Mehemet Ali Pacha on the subject of the treatment of the wounded and the Bulgarian civil population has been here. He is singularly incoherent as to the objects of his mission, has no definite proposals to make, and there are suspicions that in reality he is a spy. On some subjects he is charmingly frank. Speaking to him of the Bashi-Bazouks the Grand Duke called them "wild beasts." "Oh," said the envoy, "I am not expected to defend them. I always take an escort myself when I must pass through their camp."

The Emperor presents to Radetzky a sword set with diamonds and inscription engraved upon it, "For the defence of the Shipka Pass."

The new week promises to be bloody. Summer wanes, and decisive results become every day of more importance to the Russians, for there are indications not to be disregarded—financial, political, and social—which point against the probability of the continuance of the war into another campaign.

The following is a fuller account of Osman Pacha's sortie by an eye-witness:—

† PORADIM, *August 31st*.—Another Battle of Plevna has just been fought. The Turks this morning at eight o'clock made a furious attack on the Russian positions here, which resulted in one of the most hardly fought combats of the war.

The Turks some time ago made some feeble reconnaissances, which resulted in one or two slight cavalry skirmishes, a most unusual thing for the Turks, and about the time the attack was made on the Shipka they made a demonstration here which kept us on the alert, but which resulted in nothing else. It seemed so certain that the Turks would not attack here, and it was so evident that the Russians were not ready to resume the offensive for some days, perhaps for some weeks, that most of the Correspondents had gone away in despair. I had saddled my horse to follow their example, when about eight o'clock, my ear caught a dull, scarcely audible thumping that sounded more like a horse stamping at flies than the booming of artillery. Artillery it proved to be nevertheless, for in a few minutes it grew louder and clearer, and looking towards the line of low hills in the direction of Plevna some four miles distant, we saw several columns of white smoke rising behind them, showing where the artillery was already hard at work. The indistinctness of the sound was caused by a slight breeze blowing towards Plevna—for the distance from Ploadiu to our extreme front is scarcely five miles. Was the attack real or feigned? and would not the real battle take place on our right wing, formed by the Roumanian troops? were the questions which occurred to everybody.

The co operation between the Russians and Roumanians, I may remark is not very good. A few days ago General Zotoff changed the position of the troops of the right wing, which movement left the regiment of the Roumanians quite exposed. He informed the commander of the regiment of this fact requesting him to make a corresponding movement, to which the Roumanian colonel replied that he had no orders to receive from General Zotoff. In like manner the Roumanians, contrary to the wishes of the Russian Commander in Chief insisted upon finding another crossing of the Danube, and have crossed at the mouth of the Isker with two divisions where they are so far away from the Russian army that they are beyond the reach of help from the Russians in case of a sudden attack by the Turks. The Turks have really enough troops to make a demonstration against Zotoff, and at the same time, by a sudden movement, to fall upon the Roumanians at the mouth of the Isker, and drive them into the Danube. General Zotoff could not of course know whether he was threatened with a real or only a feigned attack until it would be too late to help the Roumanians.

When the battle began this morning everybody was of opinion

OSMAN PACHA'S ATTACK.

that it would prove to be only a demonstration centre, and that we should soon hear of some serious on our right wing. What made an attack still more improbable was that two days ago it was that Osman Pacha had sent 20,000 men from Loftcha, either to attack Skobeleff on the Selvi reinforce Suleiman Pacha by way of Trojan. I waited on either wing, and what reports of a minutes to hear whether there were any reports of a front. The report from the front was a long time so long that I grew impatient, and mounting, rode left wing, some three miles distant, in order to see for what the attack might mean.

As I rode out towards Pelisat I met great crowds of Bulg refugees, some of whom had fled from the Turkish advance in front of the Russian lines, others from the village Pelisat itself, where there would probably be hard fighting case of a battle. The whole population had put all their movable effects into waggons and carts, with the women and children, and were driving their live stock before them. The country behind the Russian lines everywhere, I may remark is covered with refugees camped in waggons, and in hastily constructed straw huts. They retreat with the Russians, and again move forward with them, showing unabated confidence when the Russians make even a slight movement in advance.

In a few minutes I had passed over the level plain between Poradim and Pelisat, a plain planted with Indian corn and vines. The ambulance waggons were already coming back with wounded. The vine hills between Pelisat and Sgalince were covered with clouds of smoke, which rose up in great white flecked balls that rolled off and disappeared in the direction of Plevna, while the deep savage roar of small-arms mingled with the thunder of artillery in a way which showed that if the Turks were making a demonstration it was a very violent one, to say the least of it.

Just to the right of Pelisat was a Russian battery throwing shells that went skimming along over the hill that rose beyond, and exploded out of sight, right in the direction of a Russian redoubt which I knew was about a mile in front of Pelisat. This was a most alarming circumstance. If the Russians were shelling their own redoubt it could only be by a fearful mistake, or else because the Turks had taken it, in which case our left wing must have already been driven back on Pelisat, and in danger of being turned. But strange to say, there were very few balls falling here, while the fight

seemed to grow more terrible towards the centre in the direction of Sgalince

Full of anxiety, I galloped forward to the hill just to the left of Pelisat, which promised a view of what was going on at the front. I found a squadron of dragoons hovering just behind the crest of this hill, and with half a dozen officers on the top watching the progress of events. I was now on the extreme Russian left and as I soon ascertained on the extreme front likewise. In front and beyond Pelisat the ground rose in a lazy incline for a distance of a mile. About the point where the Russian redoubt stood, which was not, however, visible, a mile and a half to the right, was the village of Sgalince the Russian centre, before which was another redoubt, and a series of trenches. Forward towards Plevna the ground still rose higher, so that the Russian positions were and are commanded by the positions taken by the Turks in their forward movement. The disadvantage cannot be avoided by the Russians without falling back several miles. The Russian redoubt a mile in front of Pelisat had been taken by the Turks early in the fight. The Russian left wing had been driven back on Pelisat, in front of which trenches had been dug and lined with troops.

The battle began to look like a serious one indeed. It had been raging more than an hour since we heard the first gun fired, and in that time the redoubt had been taken by the Turks, retaken by the Russians and retaken again by the Turks. This accounted for the strange firing of the battery in the centre in the direction of Sgalince to the right of Pelisat, which was still blazing away, sending its shells screaming along the ground as they rose with the hill before us and exploded beyond.

I had not been at my new standpoint more than five minutes, when the crest of the hill a mile in front, suddenly grew black as with a line of ink drawn across the sky. What was it? We applied our glasses and soon made it out to be the enemy who had just crowned the hill after taking the redoubt behind, and was now preparing for an assault on the Russian centre. Their presence there showed that the redoubt must have been again captured by the Turks though for a minute we could not make out whether they were infantry or cavalry. In less than a minute they began to descend the hill right in our direction, as though determined to drive our left out of Pelisat, and turn it. The battery to the right of the village now limbered up and retreated back on the plain about a quarter of a mile, and again took up position. My own position, with a handful of cavalry behind the hill, now

engaged, and their strength may be reckoned at about 22,000 men. The Turks cannot be estimated at more than 7,000.

Skobelev on the previous evening marched from Kakrind, his previous defensive position and earned a position on the north east of Loftcha, which rendered the place virtually untenable. In the night, therefore, the Turks fell back on the fortified range of heights behind the town, and there awaited the attack. This was begun with artillery at sunrise, and the Russian advance was so conducted that their artillery, passing south of Loftcha, took up a position enfilading the range of heights held by the Turks, and also cut off their retreat into the Balkans over the Trojan. Nevertheless the Turks resisted stubbornly, and were only driven out by hard infantry fighting which lasted till near sundown.

The Russians underwent several repulses before they were finally successful. The Turks tried to retire upon Plevna, but Skobelev's Cossack horse artillery stopped the way, and they went away due west pursued by Skobelev's Cossacks and part of the Imperial escort.

The following letter was written on the evening before the commencement of the third attack on Plevna —

POPADIM, *September 6th* — Leaving Gornj Studen yesterday morning, the headquarters of the Grand Duke went on to the village of Radenica, a few kilometres behind this place where they now remain. Coming on to Popadim I found here Prince Charles of Roumania in chief command of the whole Army of Plevna with his staff and escort. Here also was General Zotoff, who has the nominal position of chief of staff to the Prince. To day Prince Charles paid a lengthened visit to the Grand Duke Nicholas, and the final arrangements were perfected. To morrow morning at dawn of day a momentous battle will commence, but it will last more than one day.

Riding out this afternoon in the direction of Bogot, I found the troops advancing everywhere. The mistake of the last battle will not be committed of having troops half exhausted by a long march before attaining striking distance. The whole force except the reserves to night bivouac close up to the forepost line. The scene was singularly impressive. Here a long column of cavalry, with dancing pennons, wound up the gentle green slope of the downs. Here a whole regiment stood in dense black square waiting for the command to march. Here another deployed into line swept briskly forward, with bayonets flashing in the sunshine. As the

soldiers returned the greeting of the general they cheered lustily. In that cheer lingered no undertone of the sentiment conveyed in the greeting of the Roman gladiators. Battery after battery passed onward, the rattle of the wheels muffled by the grassy carpet. Slowly and with infinite labour the ox-trains lumbered forward, drawing the big siege-guns and their ammunition on the way to the prepared position whence to-morrow the huge projectiles will whistle into the Grivica redoubt. The hospital waggons, empty now, were pouring forward by the score. To-morrow night will see them full enough, for, to quote King Henry of Navarre, "Never saw I promise yet of such a bloody fray."

The following is an enumeration of the troops on the ground, with my estimate of their strength:—The 9th Corps, Baron Krüdener, comprising the 5th and 31st Divisions, 18,000 men. The 4th Corps, General Kriloff, containing the 16th and 30th Divisions, 20,000 men. One Brigade of the 2nd Division, Prince Imeretinsky, 6,000 men. One Brigade of the 3rd Division, 6,000 men. One Rifle Brigade, 3,000 men. The 1st Roumanian Division, Colonel George Angelescu, 14,000 men. The 2nd Roumanian Division, 14,000 men, Colonel Alexander Angelescu. In all say 80,000 infantry. The following are the cavalry details:—The 4th Cavalry Division, 2,000 sabres. The 9th Cavalry Division, 2,000. One Brigade of the 11th Cavalry Division, 1,000. One Brigade of Circassian Cossacks, 1,000. A portion of the Imperial escort, 200. The 1st Roumanian Division, 2,000; the 2nd Roumanian Division, 2,000. Total of cavalry, say 10,000. In all a compact and well-equipped army of about 90,000 men, with 250 field guns and 20 siege guns of 15 centimetre, an army the greater part of which had already been under fire, although this circumstance goes for but little with Russian soldiers. The Roumanians have not previously been seriously engaged, but are in fine condition and good heart, and seasoned by long camping and marching. The general in command of them under Prince Charles is General Cernat, previously War Minister, an officer with a high reputation for organization.

The arrangements for to-morrow do not appear of a complicated character. There has been a talk of elaborate strategy and of turning movements, passing both north and south of Plevna and falling on the rear of Osman Pacha. Some indication of a turning movement was suggested when Prince Imeretinsky took Loftcha, but the suggestion was deceptive. The course of attack promises to be almost identical with that pursued on the previous occasion. I have explained, I fear *usque ad nauseam*, that the Turkish positions were roughly

in the form of a horseshoe, the convexity pointing toward the east, and the town of Plevna standing about the centre of the base. The Russians have left the base open to the east, and to-morrow they will be brought to their own front. Grivica stands in the toe of the horseshoe, and opposite the horseshoe is the Russo-Roumanian centre, in the rear of which is the place where I now write.

Here are fixed for the day the army headquarters and here Prince Charles will probably be joined by the Grand Duke Nicholas with his staff. The Russians have the ground to the left, the ground of Schahofskoy in the previous battle. The Roumanians have the section of the environment to the right of the centre, being the ground on which Krudener fought so stubbornly, although ineffectually, on the 30th of July. The front of each section is of about equal extent. The Turkish positions opposite the Roumanian section are the stronger both by nature and art. But there are but 28,000 Roumanians to 50,000 Russians. It seems logically to follow that the function of the Roumanians is intended to be chiefly of a demonstrative character. They will doubtless assail the Turkish positions opposite to them and take advantage of opportunities should such offer. But they will do good service if they, to use a technical term, "hold" the Turks confronting them while the centre and left are delivering blow upon blow on the weaker sections of the Turkish front opposite them.

It cannot, indeed, be said that Grivica is a weak point, but it

preparation. The line is prolonged toward the left flank by the 31st Division. On the downs above Sgalince and Pelisat, where General Krudener, commanding the 9th Corps, made up by the two divisions just named, will have his headquarters, the alignment is yet further prolonged by the 30th Division and the 16th Division, reaching from the touch of the 31st Division to Bogot, where the 16th Division is chiefly massed, and where General Kriloff, commanding the 4th Corps, will have his headquarters. Prince Imeretinsky, from Loftcha, has detached one brigade south to Trojan to guard against trouble from that region, and to-day has marched north along the chaussée in the direction of Plevna with three brigades, viz., one brigade of the 2nd Division, one brigade of the 3rd Division, and the Tirailleur Brigade.

Of the details of his dispositions I am unaware, except that he touches General Kriloff near Bogot, and that his force is *à cheval* of the Chaussée, and constitutes the Russians' extreme left flank, which is very strong either for direct attack or for outflanking the Turkish position.

* NEAR RADISOVO, *September 7th*.—General Zotoff left Poradim last night, and spent the night in personally seeing to the disposition of the troops, returning no more to Poradim.

From no point is it possible to witness the whole of a battle extending over so wide an extent of front, and it remains for a Correspondent to choose the locality he considers likely to be most interesting. General Zotoff overnight had named to me as a rendezvous-place for the morning the heights between Sgalince and Pelisat, and thither, in the first instance, setting forward while it was yet dark, I directed my way. The morning was cold, but fine, with no clammy drizzle as on the morning of the previous battle. There was a weird impressiveness in the period of waiting up there among the long grass, watching the east for the light wherewithal to begin the fell game of battle. There had been a sharp frost during the night, and as the sun began to rise the whole surface of the earth was covered with a dense frost fog, which hung until dispelled by the sun's rays. About Pelisat I found the light brigade of the 4th Cavalry Division standing in reserve, along with a regiment of the Roumanian infantry and some Roumanian militia. I followed the road from Pelisat to Plevna in the direction of Radisovo along the high ground which had constituted the line of Schahofskoy's advance. We were on a broad saddle with undulations on either side of us. On the road we passed several battalions of the 30th and 5th Divisions, who had been working all night making battery emplacements for big guns, and were now going back towards Pelisat to constitute the reserve. We found ourselves just in the rear of the line of our batteries. On the slopes on our right were twelve of the big guns. On the slope on the other side were eight more, singularly close to the village of Grivica. In position in front of the great guns were the field batteries. The two on the right fired against the Grivica redoubt above the village. Three more were blazing away at what, in my narrative of the previous battle, I called the first Turkish position on the lower central ridge in front of Plevna.

The firing began about half-past six, it being now eight. There was no artillery firing apparent elsewhere than from the batteries whose position I have described. In the hollows in

front, behind, and on the flanks of the batteries, were stowed away the infantry of the 5th and 31st Divisions, constituting the 9th Corps Radisovo on our left front held by the Turks yesterday, was reported evacuated overnight by them, and we had batteries, not indeed quite on the height before it, where in the previous battles Schahofskoy's cannon stood and fired so long, but on the slope to the right of it, almost in a line with, but retired from the height I have named The firing waxes and wanes A few of the siege guns on the right which can get sight of the towers of Plevna down the long hollow are pitching shells in that direction and the field guns fire in gusts and then are almost still The indomitable Grivica redoubt now fires, now is still with an almost comical nonchalance Now and then a man is wounded in the batteries in our immediate front but as yet the work is child's play, and the work of the day can hardly be said to have begun

Affairs not progressing rapidly here, we rode away due south across the fields behind the Radisovo hills and valley to Tucenica Mounting the slope beyond we looked back north west toward the reserve on the slope of the height behind Radisovo and observed there a large mass of infantry and artillery belonging to the Turkish division, while above them on the ridge a battery was in action Radisovo itself we could not see because it stands imbedded in a curious fold of the valley Whether it was held by the Turks or not we could not tell We saw a few horsemen moving about, but whether Russian or Turkish patrols it was impossible to see on this slope No mass of troops was visible, nor any artillery A column of infantry and artillery was marching through Tucenica on the southward to Bogot and this we followed, although it took us somewhat further away from Plevna, because by going towards Bogot it would be possible to learn what, if anything, was doing on our left flank So far as regards the right opposite Grivica there was as yet nothing save artillery fire On the plateau above Bogot troops stood ready to march They were in battle array, and although their uniforms were sombre, still they made an imposing show As we came up the slope by Bogot we passed a battalion of the 9th Division, an isolated battalion, marching down toward Tucenica, followed by a sotnia of wild looking Kulanski Cossacks

Putting our horses to feed in a deserted farmyard, we moved up through the massed troops, horse, foot and artillery, toward where the staff of General Zotoff stood on the hilltop As we tramped Sloboleff dashed past us at the head of a sotnia of Circassian Cossacks with whom he had been making

a reconnaissance along the Loftcha-Plevna chaussée, and was on the way back to make a report. Prince Imeretinsky, fresh from his victory at Loftcha, was here above Botok, and his regiments were tramping down the slope, steadily up the hill, and down the slope again, on their way over Tucenica towards the ridge about Radisovo. After a brief halt we followed the great column, a curious mixture of regiments of the 2nd Division, the 11th Division, and even the 12th Division, and followed on to the height behind Radisovo, the spot where Schahofskoy delayed awhile to enable Krüdener to come up in co-operation.

The battle had as yet hung fire, but now it was certainly warming. Our cannon, great and small, on the Russian right flank, where we had been in the morning, were firing furiously, whether still against Grivica or not we could not as yet tell. Another battery on the left of us, above Radisovo, was shelling what was called the Turkish first position. The well-remembered scene lay stretched before me. The village of Radisovo at my feet, where the wounded died at the hands of the Bashi-Bazouks, the ridge above so swept erstwhile by the Turkish shells that I had to dismount, with now once again its slope occupied by masses of Russian infantry, the white smoke hanging in the valley and on the low central ridge behind, the further ridge crowned with the Turkish camps, the towers of Plevna down among the green trees in the valley behind the town where the Russian dead lay so thickly. It was much the old thing. We were working round on our left flank, but there was that indomitable Grivica redoubt blazing away as hard as ever.

There seemed no hurry. We sat down contentedly on the slope above the village and looked down into the place so peaceful-seeming there with its low roofs amid the setting of greenery. How history repeats itself! Here again are the shells crashing into Radisovo or exploding against the slope on which we rest. Here again are Russian infantry men lying down on the reverse slope beyond Radisovo, waiting for the word to cross the crest and sally down into that valley already littered with so many Russian dead. Here again are the Russian guns on that crest belching their thunder against the Turkish positions. Still through all this turmoil, as through the last, the white towers and sparkling roofs of Plevna smile serenely in the sunshine.

We lie here hour after hour and watch the scene. It is impossible to tell the progress of the fight, for it makes no progress. Still hour after hour the batteries which first opened in the morning blaze away. The batteries on the crest above

Radisovo fire steadily if less swiftly. The battery on our left hand more slowly still. The Turkish shells burst with great clouds of smoke and dust on the crest on the reverse slope and village of Radisovo. The Grivica redoubt holds its own with its fire. Nowhere does the Turkish artillery seem in the least degree dominated. The village of Radisovo is blazing at our feet. It has at length caught fire after so many hair-breadth escapes. The sun sinks, and the situation remains unaltered. Scarcely a rifle has been fired to-day, all the work done has been with artillery, and the Russian loss is a mere handful. Probably the Turkish is not much greater. In every material sense Plevna is as far off being taken as ever. The Russians are taking two bites at a cherry. Will they do it at two?

* *BEFORE PLEVNA, September 8th* — When the fighting, or rather cannonade, recommenced this morning, it was not easy at first sight to recognize that the Russians had gained any advantage by their profuse powder-burning of the day before. Last night the parapet of the Grivica redoubt had seemed a good deal jagged by the Russian shell fire, but, under cover of night, all its defects had been made good, and it looked as trim as if never a shot had been fired at it. But the Russians had been at work also during the night. They had gained a
of Grivica, that is, their
orward in the fortunate
ins had been built and
armed on an elevation comparatively close to and overhanging
Grivica village, and within easy battery range of the irre-
pressible redoubt.

As soon as the sun rose that battery came into action against the redoubt, supported by isolated big guns. Away to the right, and further to the rear on the left in rear of the advanced battery, the original battery of siege guns sent its fire sweeping down the valley and over traversing undulations into what in the previous battle was called the Turkish first position, the redoubt and entrenched village in the central swell. This position was also receiving the fire of two or three batteries of field guns stationed on the heights beyond Radisovo, the height where Schahofskoy's cannon stood so long. The redoubt could not reply to the siege battery, the range of the latter being too long, so it accepted punishment from that quarter, and pounded away in reply to the field batteries on the ridge. The practice was not good. I don't fancy there were ten casualties on that ridge throughout the day.

The Russian siege battery firing into the Grivica Redoubt made admirable practice: shell after shell, as I sat watching through my glass, burst in the parapet or went slap into the redoubt. Every now and then the guns were silent for ten minutes or so at a time, and sanguine people began to think that the stubborn defence had been abandoned, and that the defenders had departed bag and baggage. But when the Turk is in a place and means to stop there, he is a difficult customer to dislodge. The pause had been but a short interval to repair damages, and presently the Grivica gun-fire would recommence in its old jaunty fashion. It is not the key to the position, but its reduction would be a valuable gain; and instead of spreading their fire as they have done, the Russians should have concentrated upon it the whole weight of their bombardment, and made it untenable by dint of a hailstorm of shells. As it is they may bombard it for a week, sacrifice a brigade of infantry, and then after all not succeed in taking it. The assault was intended to have been begun yesterday afternoon at five, but the Russian clock is always more or less slow, and it came to pass that, owing to late starting and delays by the way, the troops were not quite all in position by the appointed time, and so the attack was postponed. Everywhere now the infantry are in position waiting for the word.

The scene from my commanding elevation is singularly interesting. Behind every swell, in the hollow of every depression, lying down behind the screen of Indian corn, are soldiers, some far away out beyond the batteries, and the Russian shells and Turkish shells whistle over their heads without disturbing them. Others are snugly stowed to the right and left of the batteries, lying on the reverse slopes so as to be clear of the hostile shells. All round the edge of the horizon, from the River Vid on the north, to the Loftcha-Plevna road on the south, rises up against the pale blue sky the white smoke of the cannon-fire. The Turkish horseshoe is girdled by a cincture of cannon-fire and armed men; but the Turk hardens his heart and gives back shell for shell, as in the impending fight he will return cheer for cheer, rifle-shot for rifle-shot, and bayonet-stab for bayonet-stab.

It is a curiously lazy moment for a Correspondent. After he has written down dry facts he has little to record. A regiment rises out of one hollow and marches through the tall Indian corn to another hollow, which is thought a better place. The villagers of Grivica down there in the hollow between the batteries, with shells interminably whistling over their heads, are actually engaged treading out their barley, on the primi-

tive threshing floor of hardened mud, the men shaking the straw, the women driving the ponies in the endless round Stoicism or fatalism or indifference, or despair, which are we to call it? Old Baron Krudener, with his staff about him, looks down on the scene from behind the battery overhanging Grivica. The veteran has slept upon the field, and there is a look on his face that would indicate that he is no longer the victim of peremptory commands to do what his personal judgment condemns.

Some Roumanian guns are firing steadily into the Grivica Redoubt from the position at the corner of the wood on Krudener's right, but it is a long range, and the shells are falling short of the redoubt on to the slope more to the left instead. Going down into a little valley and ascending then a little hill we find ourselves in the rear of the Russian great battery of the right flank, a battery containing twelve siege guns. The emplacement in which these are lodged is rough enough, but strong. The guns are fired en barbette. The battery has the valley ad fortified centre face

with three guns looks toward a Turkish redoubt behind the Grivica Redoubt, and connecting it with the great Plitzitz position on the due north flank of Plevna. The right face, armed with three guns, looks across at the Grivica Redoubt itself.

There are those among the spectators who think that Osman Pacha has virtually evacuated the position and has left to hold it only a few thousand men with guns of position. To my thinking this view is utterly fallacious. The Turks are to day developing a wider range of artillery fire than they did on that dreadful day when Schahofskoy and Krudener in vain dashed against their positions. The Turks are adepts in marking time. They fire no harder than they find necessary. They are firing now steadily and deliberately in reply to a fire which to all appearance, is not materially injuring them. If needful they could, I think, fire harder. Let the word be given to attack with infantry, and I venture to predict for the attacking Russians a mighty warm reception.

I note the Turkish camps on their most northerly ridge full of men all the way back from the Grivica Redoubt to the Plitzitz scarped height. On the central swell, I can see masses of their infantry men lying in the hollows, having turned out for the sake of safety from the shell scourged redoubts. Leaving the great battery I ride round more to the left and more forward, coming over the level and descending a little way down the

slope into the shell-fire. The theatre of the defence, and a large portion of the offence, the whole, indeed, of its right and centre, lie displayed before me. Directly opposite me is the Grivica Redoubt. Almost directly to the left of me is Plevna. Almost directly on the right is the Russian great battery. On my left front there are the Turkish positions—the main positions in fact before Plevna—those positions assailed by Schahofskoy on the 30th July. Their guns by this time are in full action, for the plot thickens towards noon. The Russian infantry has been pushed forward in skirmishing order, a tirailleur leading them, and the Archangel and Uglaskosky regiments following through the maize fields on the centre swell, driving back the outlying Turks. The artillery follow them, and come into action at short range against a Turkish redoubt. The Russians have now three lines of fire—the first, the field guns down in the maize; the second, also field guns, on the lower undulation behind at medium range; and the great cannon behind. The Turkish return fire, chiefly directed at the Russian first line of artillery, is very heavy. The ground is ploughed in all directions with their shells. Hardly any harm is done. The infantry lie quiet in the hollows along the fields; the gunners take their chance among the maize, and the enemy's shells mostly fly over them. Indeed, it is open to doubt whether the aim of the Turkish fire be not partly to search the reverse slopes.

For an hour and more there was very little change in the aspect of affairs hereabouts, so I moved still farther to our left to the crest of the range beyond and above Radisovo, where Schahofskoy's cannon stood so long. When I first arrived the crest was one array of field batteries, and the firing was very heavy, the Turkish shells doing great damage among the gunners, and falling behind among the infantry on the reverse slopes, and in Radisovo. But between two and three o'clock the guns advanced from the crest down the slope towards the Turkish positions, and continued to fire somewhat slackly at this shortened range. The fire of the guns on the left of this range of batteries must have reached into Plevna, and the reply came not alone from the Turkish batteries of the outer redoubts, but also from the cannon on the flanks of the town. This despatch leaves the field at five o'clock. There are no indications of the assault to-day, and I believe it will not be commenced till to-morrow afternoon, although a redoubt may be earlier assaulted. The cincture of Russian cannon is drawing close round the Turkish positions; but the test will be not with cannon, but with prowess of men with arms in their hands. The Emperor, Prince Charles, and the Grand Duke

on the right flank front of the redoubt constituting the first Turkish position, and, looking across the valley, once strewn with Russian corpses, can see with a glass the Turkish gunners going coolly about their work amid the bursting of shells. Plevna lies on our left front. There comes now no Turkish fire on to the ridge where we stand, hot place as it was yesterday. The Russians have infantry massed on its reverse slope, waiting for the attack. They keep their guns silent just here, although the batteries on the same ridge to the right and left give and take.

Surveying the scene leisurely, I can discern how much stronger than at the time of the last battle Plevna is now. On the south and south-west of the town are several wholly new redoubts. There is one very large one on a detached knoll due south of the town, and on the long wooded ridge stretching up from it towards the Vid there is quite a chain of redoubts linked together by a covered way, and making a good line of Turkish cover on their right flank, and indeed partly in their rear as far as the river Vid. It was against the farthest of these redoubts that General Skobelev went last night. Through the glass I can see little knots of Russian soldiers among the trees, and a few Turkish soldiers out on the stubble behind the works. These new redoubts command also the Loftcha-Selvi road, and they cover the side road coming into Plevna from out of the valley of the Vid, which otherwise might be utilized in a turning movement. On this southern face of which I speak are three strong redoubts connected by a covered way, with battery emplacements at intervals and rows of shelter-trenches. In front, on the central swell, I discern eight separate redoubts, besides a line of defence on the downs immediately covering the town of Plevna, and this is wholly exclusive of the great northern ridge. Its summit and slopes are one great entrenched camp, studded with redoubts and battery emplacements. The longer one looks at the place the more thoroughly does one come to feel the toughness of the work taken in hand by the Russians. The position must be attacked as a whole and taken as a whole. Granted that the northern ridge is taken and occupied in its integrity, the position of the central swell is not materially impaired. Suppose a lodgment effected on the central swell, that lodgment would be commanded by the northern ridge and the redoubts on the south of the town. All that is wanted to make the Turkish position virtually impregnable was the occupation and fortification of the ridge in front of Radisovo, that ridge on the exposed crest of which I am now writing. Probably this was not undertaken owing

to a conviction that the force available was not strong enough to hold so wide an area

Where is the Turkish force, be it great or small? I sweep the scene with my glass, and the only living things visible are the gunners on the slopes under the entrenched camps. But there are no moving figures around them, no soldier treads the brown sward between the redoubts, and yet it is said that in the entrenched camps on the northern ridge alone are quite 30 000 Turks, and I venture to aver that let the Russian infantry advance and very soon from the edge of the shelter trenches and redoubts would burst out white jets of musketry fire. Toward the afternoon the cannon firing has been much heavier than in the early part of the day. There has been some forepost skirmishing fire. The field guns were within 800 paces of the Turkish redoubts, which as night fell offered great temptation to the Turkish infantry. In the afternoon a battery was constructed on the height above Radisovo. This battery will be armed in the night with six or eight siege cannon from the great battery and the fire of these will fall at a short range on the first Turkish position. All for the assault to morrow.

Radisovo height with the 31st Division, to be closer for the assault upon the Turkish first position. Everything portends for to morrow a bloody day.

- * BEFORE PLEVNA, September 10th—Still this long drawn out artillery duel continues, and it is still doubtful whether the assault will be made to day. In my telegram yesterday I mentioned a movement forward to the height before Radisovo of a portion of the siege guns of the Russian great battery, and of three regiments of the 31st Division. There was no cessation of cannon fire until after nightfall, but after my message left the field occurred several interesting episodes. The Grand Duke, with Prince Charles and General Zotoff, came forward into the line of the batteries on and upon either side of the prolongation of the ridge on which stands the Grivica Redoubt in order to watch the effect of the infantry fire against the Turkish gunners working the cannon of the redoubt. Already indeed the Roumanian infantry had occupied a species of natural shelter trench in front of their advanced battery, and had been doing their best to pick off the Turkish gunners, but much effect had not been apparent. A couple of companies of Russian infantry, just as the sun was sinking, quitted some brushwood about half up the slope between the village of Grivica and the redoubt. They had lain in this brushwood all day. They advanced in skirmishing order

up the slope towards the redoubt, firing as they advanced. They got up pretty close, and were not without hopes of entering the redoubt without much opposition. The impression had prevailed that the Turks were evacuating the redoubt, and the officers thought that they had seen the Turkish guns going back from out of the redoubt towards the entrenched camp. A Cossack officer with nine men left the advancing skirmishers, and pushed on towards the glacis. They got within a hundred yards of the foot of it, but then there confronted them a row of Turkish rifle muzzles, and a row of Turkish heads above the crest of the shelter-trench, a little way in front of the outward slope of the parapet of the redoubt. The Cossack did not, under these circumstances, think it advisable to persevere, and retired on his supports, who remained where they were until nightfall, exchanging a desultory fire with the Turkish skirmishers in the shelter-trench. During the night there were several outbursts of infantry fire, but none of importance.

This morning, the field guns in the valley against the Turkish first position in the central swell are moved somewhat farther forward, and the field guns which were yesterday on the heights in front of Radisovo, have given up that position to the siege guns, and have themselves moved forward down the slope, where they are now in action against the southern flank of the Turkish first position at a very short range; but the cannonade languishes. The time would seem to have come for delivering the assault, if it ever is to be delivered; but I understand that once again there is a postponement. The Turks are to have another day of shell-fire, and then tomorrow, reckoned as an auspicious day, as it is the Emperor's name-day, the great effort with the infantry is to be made. It may be worth noting that the bombardment began on the anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. It is a dull day. We look, for instance, to vary the monotony, to Prince Tcherkasky, who has abandoned for a time the reorganization of Bulgaria. He is riding about the field at the head of a train of ambulance waggons, anxious to discover the best place at which to station them. Yesterday I advised him to go to Imeretinsky, on our left flank, and there he found a harvest. To-day I ventured to suggest to him that he will do well to place his vehicles on the heights behind Radisovo, as one of Krüdener's divisions will there be in his front under fire. He rides on in the direction indicated, unmindful that that part of the road he must traverse is swept by the Turkish shell-fire.

It was very monotonous here, and I ventured once more on the

height in front of Radisovo, although, owing to the removal thither of some siege guns the return fire from the Turks made that position far from an elysium of safety. I found on the reserve slope three of Krudener's regiments, on the crest itself, the General of Artillery, with his staff, sitting down to save exposure. On our left, nearer Plevna, was the siege battery, sending shells right over the Turkish central swell into the entrenched camp on the northern ridge, while at our feet, on the slope, and also in front of the Turkish first position on the central swell, the Russian field guns were firing at the redoubt. The Artillery General told me that in it there had been four guns yesterday which had been dismounted, and that during the night four more had been brought up into it, which were now replying. They were making sad and slow work of it in the midst of the hurricane of shells poured into the redoubt, and every now and then many minutes elapsed when the fire therefrom was altogether silent and when it seemed that the redoubt had been silenced. But the Turk dies hard, and ever after a pause came back a shell or two. The central ridge was being heavily bombarded by the Russian field batteries to the left of the great gun battery, and was answering with spirit aided by the guns in the redoubt. Due south of Plevna the Russian batteries on the ridge were also firing at the church of Plevna, which had been converted into a powder magazine. From this summit it was clear that the Russian fire was gradually beating down the fire of the Turks. The Roumanians on the right flank had worked very far round so as to reach behind Rahovo, and the cannon of their right attack were now shelling the Turkish entrenched camp on the northern ridge, which the siege guns
Imeretinsky was
thundering
I not appear to
have got
went for the
redoubt the evening before last. The day wore away with no further incident.

To night the Emperor and the Grand Duke sleep in Poradim, so as to be near at hand for to morrow's work. If nothing unforeseen occurs, the assault will be made ere to morrow's sun sets. It is time Plevna was over and done with, for the Czarowitch has been compelled to fall back from the line of the Lom. To night it rains and thunders.

The following letter, describing Skobelev's attack upon the Turkish redoubt, is from another Correspondent —

† BEFORE PLEVNA, *Saturday, September 8th* — This attack upon

Plevna resembles a siege more than anything else. So far there does not seem to have been a single shot exchanged by the infantry. After a hard day's work yesterday the big battery of twelve siege guns opened fire this morning at day-break, and has been pounding away ever since until now, twelve o'clock. I observe a considerable escape of gas from the heavy steel guns of 13 centimètres calibre, of which there are four. Behind this battery is an observatory, consisting of a ladder about 60 feet high, sustained by ropes, on the top of which is generally a soldier with a field-glass, watching the result of the firing. The position of this man when a shell comes along, as it does every now and then, threatening to cut the ladder in two and bring him down with a rush, must be very disagreeable.

The Roumanian batteries away to the right can be heard pounding away on their side, and from our position in the big batteries smoke can be seen to the left overlooking Radisovo, where the Russian guns are blazing away in exactly the same position they were in yesterday; and although yesterday evening the necessity of advancing the batteries nearer the Turkish positions was admitted on all hands, we found this morning on looking at the position that nothing of the kind had been done. The fire of the Turkish redoubt of Grivica does not seem to have slackened in the least, in spite of the number of shells thrown into it yesterday; and although we can see the earth flying into the air in the middle of the redoubt, and now and then pieces of the parapet are carried away, the Turkish guns reply to the Russian as regularly as clockwork. Whatever loss may have been inflicted upon them in men, certainly we do not seem to have succeeded in dismounting any of their guns. It is very probable that the Turks have not many men in the redoubt, but they are hidden in the trenches and low places in the ground outside, and beyond that, a few only are kept in the redoubt for the management of the guns, who as fast as they are killed are replaced by others. Were it otherwise, if the Turks kept the redoubt full of men, the loss would be terrible, for an enormous number of shells have been thrown into it by the Russians and Roumanians.

Part of the guns of the big battery are fired upon this redoubt, part on the entrenched camp away to the left of the redoubt overlooking Plevna, and part on the Turkish batteries in the hollow between Grivica and Plevna. The fire of these batteries is less steady, more irregular, and not so well sustained as yesterday. It is probable that some of the guns have been dismounted. The firing, nevertheless, is still kept up. I

say I do not believe much in the effect of this artillery. There were to be mounted altogether four hundred guns ranging upon the Turkish positions, but, so far, not more than one hundred or a hundred and twenty seem to have been brought into position, and, as far as may be judged, the effect to the present moment has been very slight. They have to come to much closer quarters than at present before the artillery fire can be made to tell.

On the Russian right and centre the attack maintains its character of a siege, such is not the case on the left, where General Zotoff has ordered an advance. Leaving the big battery about noon, which was slowly pounding away with sledge hammer blows on the Grivica redoubt and the other batteries, I rode along the line to the left, passing round the whole series of batteries, from the centre past Radisovo almost to the Loftcha road. We found a battery at Radisovo, throwing shells into one of the Turkish redoubts in front of the town. No embankments had been thrown up here, but the guns simply placed in line along the town hill, were worked very rapidly, and I observed that there was no escape of gas from the breeches of these guns. This battery was behind, and to the left of Radisovo, on the ridge which runs parallel to the little hollow which goes down towards Plevna from Grivica. In front of Radisovo is another ridge running parallel to this and on this ridge was placed one more Russian battery, while the side opposite to the Turks was covered with infantry lying behind cover on the crest. This battery was also pouring a well sustained fire on the lower Turkish redoubts before Plevna. Having passed behind the battery, proceeded farther to the left, where the hillside was covered with cornfields, vineyards, and a number of trees, threw ourselves down under the shade of the trees to lunch with the aid of some delicious grapes just ripe and watch the battle from this point. Plevna was quite visible and we could have been little more than two miles distant from it. And far down before us, distant about a mile was a line of troops still lying under cover of the large, apparently waiting for the moment to begin the attack. These troops could not have been more than a mile from Plevna, and from our standpoint seemed not more than two or three hundred yards from the town.

The view from here is exceedingly fine. Down in what seemed a narrow valley or gorge, we could perceive the town of Plevna, with its masses of green foliage, from which rose the slender spires of two or three minarets. On the mountain behind Plevna, some distance above the town, we

could distinguish two redoubts on the other side of the Loftcha road, from which rose two columns of smoke. Behind and above these redoubts were high wooded mountains extending round towards the right. On the other side of this valley is a ridge beginning behind Plevna, and extending to the right as far as Grivica. It is on this ridge that the principal Turkish defences are built—two entrenched camps and two or three redoubts, the last of which, behind Grivica, is the one against which Krüdener's forces were broken, and against which the Roumanian batteries, and part of the heavy siege batteries, are now playing. From the hills all around rose columns and columns of white smoke, and there was not an instant when these hills were not echoing with the thunder of a hundred and fifty guns, Turkish and Russian, that were roaring at each other.

Then again on our left, on a ridge this side of the Loftcha road, at a distance of a mile and a half or two miles, was another Russian battery pounding away at some invisible foe on the other side. The sun is hot, and a veil of smoke hangs over hill, valley, and mountain, which often makes it difficult to distinguish with certainty anything but a sudden flash of fire and a huge ball of white smoke that rises from each discharge of the line described by the Russian and Roumanian positions round Plevna, which begins opposite Bukova, extending nearly parallel with the Sistova road until beyond Grivica, then curving round past Radisovo until within two miles of Plevna, nearly on the Loftcha road, then extending along the Loftcha road on the ridge as far as opposite Krishine. The line thus described is exactly in the form of a reaping-hook, with the point opposite Bukova, the middle of the curve opposite Grivica, the junction of the handle close into Plevna, and the end of the handle at Krishine. The point nearest Plevna, it will be perceived, is near the Loftcha road, at the junction of the handle with the blade.

We had not been in our position under the trees more than ten minutes when we were evidently perceived by a look-out in one of the Turkish redoubts below Radisovo, and probably believing that the Indian cornfield by the side of us, interspersed here and there with trees, was very likely filled with troops, they began to shell us. After they had thrown three shells, all of which fell within twenty yards of us, and the last considerably nearer, we thought it was time to decamp, and withdrew behind the ridge, where a considerable number of soldiers were lying. We finished our lunch under the shade of another tree in a less advantageous position for sight-seeing, and when I again mounted the top of the ridge I was

to see two more Russian batteries far down the direction of Plevna, just to the right of the spot we had seen the Russian troops previously. These were now within a mile of Plevna and were shelling the redoubts behind Plevna in a corner formed by the of the Sofia road. Columns of white smoke were to the sky, and the sharp whip like cracks of these pieces were mingling angrily with the dull heavy roar of the siege guns in the big battery above. I pushed down the vineyards and cornfields and trees farther and towards the Loftcha road, following the ridge down to its ends in the deep narrow ravine running almost to the Loftcha road.

I climbed up into a tree to get a better view of the scene when a Cossack came and informed us that there was nothing more interesting going on on our left, that the Russians were advancing there, with "hurrahs." We went across the ridge a short distance and saw what it was the Russians under Imeretinsky and Skobelev, the same as at the Loftcha the other day, were advancing rapidly along the ridge bordering on the Loftcha road towards Plevna. The Loftcha road, before entering Plevna, passes over the summit of a hill covered with trees, which are not so dense, however, as to be called a wood. The summit of this

is about a mile and a half distant from the Turkish position in the bend of the Sofia road. The Russians were advancing over this mountain in loose order, with cavalry in front for we saw a number of horsemen making their way through the trees and a few minutes later perceived a couple of squadrons of dragoons advancing along the Loftcha road, cautiously treading their way as they went. They were on the top of the hill probably half a mile, when we

heads

there was

under

Russians

shells

is where the dragoons were massed under the trees. We must have been able to see these dragoons, for the shells fell directly in the line. Each successive shell fell nearer and closer, so that the dragoons began to shift their position.

It was perhaps twenty minutes. Then from the whole side of the mountain began to be heard the rattle of small arms, which grew heavier and heavier, and the mountain and trees were soon covered with clouds of thin blue smoke. It was

the infantry arriving in line and beginning the attack. The Turks were posted in the trees at the foot of this mountain, and probably half a mile in front of the redoubt, and replied to the Russian fire with vigour. The Russians gradually advanced down the side of the mountain through the trees, driving back the Turks, part of whom seemed to retire upon Plevna, but the greater part upon the redoubt. The Russians pushed down to almost the bottom of the hill, and we saw the Turks retreating up the smooth slope leading towards the redoubt by hundreds, and from the redoubt itself began to be poured forth a heavy fire upon the Russians on the opposite slope. The Russians pushed down steadily nevertheless in loose order, firing as they came; but as they neared the foot of the slope the Turkish fire became terrible. From the parapets of the redoubt poured forth a steady wave of flame, and the redoubt itself was soon hidden in the thick fog of white smoke that rose over it. The roar of this tremendous fire was simply fearful. I do not remember to have ever heard anything like it, or to have ever seen in any battle anything like so well-sustained a fire.

This also lasted about twenty minutes. Then the Russian skirmishing line, which had already reached the foot of the slope, began to withdraw, and in a few minutes they had retired to a position half way up the slope, where they halted, and the slackening of the fire told that for the moment the attack upon the redoubt, if attack it was, had failed. We now saw the Turks coming down again from the redoubt, and re-entering the trees at the foot of the slope where the Russians had been, and likewise those who had retreated towards Plevna seemed to come out again, for we saw them in the maize fields, just on the other side of the ravine between us and them, pushing along as though they would turn the right of the Russian attack. This was impossible, because the infantry on our side were lying close behind the ridge, and would have effectually prevented any movement of this kind.

During all the time this fight lasted our batteries, which I have already spoken of as having advanced so far down towards Plevna, were quite silent; why I cannot understand, for just at this moment when the attack was going on they should have concentrated their whole fire upon the redoubt, and I cannot understand why the infantry, which was lying in masses near these batteries, did not take part in the attack. The whole burden was on the left column advancing by the Loftcha road, nor was there any attack made anywhere else at the same time, nor on any other of the Turkish positions.

The artillery fire had ceased everywhere. Everybody seemed to be waiting the result of this attack. This was just the very way to make the attack a failure, even if it had any chances of success, for the whole army to stand still and look idly on while one small detachment was trying to attack the redoubt. It is a very strange proceeding. Not a single shot was fired at the small body of skirmishers who came out from Plevna, and annoyed the right of the attack, although they were within easy range both of the artillery and infantry.

The attack had begun about five, too late in the day to accomplish anything if the capture of the redoubt had been intended. This was probably not hoped for to-day. The Russians remained in the positions to which they had withdrawn on the slope of the mountain, and the Turks began to swarm out of the redoubt down to the foot of the slope. They were evidently attacking in their turn, and bent upon driving the Russians back to the point which they had originally occupied in the morning. Although it was not light enough to see, I imagine that the Russians had already been strengthening their positions by digging, for they now poured a fire from the line they had occupied, which in steadiness and fury was only equalled by the Turks from their redoubt. The Turks had already advanced a considerable way up the slope before the Russians opened fire, and they did not stand a moment under it. They retreated through the trees, and again up the slope to the redoubt, hotly pursued by the Russians, who followed them to the foot of the slope.

The fire on both sides was now dreadful, and the Russians seem to have received a considerable number of reinforcements, for their advance was far more steady and swift, more self confident than the previous one had been. They swept down into the little hollow between the opposite slopes, and then poured a terrible fire on the Turkish redoubt from behind the trees, and under cover of the banks, stones, earth, and anything they could find to shelter themselves. This time the attack was moreover supported by our batteries on the right, which now advanced still nearer Plevna, and concentrated their fire on the Turkish redoubt.

At the time the Russians were advancing down the hill, the whole valley was filled with smoke. The town of Plevna, as well as the Turkish redoubts and even part of the wood where the Russians were, had become invisible. The sun was now just setting behind a mass of clouds, but it was seen for a few minutes like a fiery blood shot eye, which tinged the smoke hanging over everything with the colour of

blood. Then it suddenly disappeared behind the mountain, and darkness settled down over the scene. The fire continued for some few minutes longer, and from the redoubt, as from the foot of the slope and the foot of the mountains, sprang forth thousands upon thousands of jets of flame like fireflies. Then the fire suddenly ceased. The fight for the night was over. The Russians remained in their positions at the foot of the slope which leads up to the redoubt, about a quarter of a mile from the parapet. It could not have been their hope or intention to advance any farther.

To-day's attack was begun too late to have carried the redoubt, unless it could have been done by a simple assault with the bayonet—a manner of attack which, I think, the Russians have abandoned against the trenches held by the Turks. They will probably dig trenches here in the night so as to shelter themselves from the fire of the redoubt, and then either work gradually up to the redoubt by means of shallow trenches, which could be dug very rapidly, and which would enable them to reach the parapet in the day, or, choosing a favourable moment to-morrow morning, make a rush for it. Of the two plans, the former, in my opinion, has the better chance of success. The distance from the Russian positions to the redoubt is probably something over a quarter of a mile, up a smooth even slope, where there is not cover for a rabbit. The glacis is a quarter of a mile, or perhaps a little more, in extent. The loss of an assaulting column rushing up over this glacis under the fire the Turks poured out of the redoubt yesterday, would be something terrible. If the Turks stood to their positions and fired with anything like precision, not one man would probably reach the parapets; but then it is also possible that the defenders of the redoubt, seeing the Russians close, would lose their presence of mind, and fire wildly over the heads of the assaulting party.

I now retired from the position which I had occupied during the whole fight; and although it was almost dark, and I did not think I could be seen from the Turkish redoubt, I soon found out my mistake. I and my comrade had not been under cover for more than three or four minutes, when a shell was fired at us, which passed over our heads, and exploded not more than forty feet before us, exactly in the road which we were following. As there was no battery anywhere near here, and no Russian troops either, the shot could only have been fired at us, and it was the last fired by that redoubt this evening.

We made our way back to the top of the plateau behind

Radisovo, but the night now became so dark that it was impossible to find one's way across the fields. There was no water here for our horses but that contained in a muddy, stinking pool, which, however, they drank greedily. For ourselves, we obtained a drink from an ambulance, and then, coming upon a heap of unthrashed wheat, we gave a few bundles of it to our horses, and made the rest into a bed and a house for the night. The greater part of this telegram was written here in the fields by the light of a spluttering candle blown about by the wind. All around us we see the flickering of lights and camp fires in the distance, and every now and then flashes of fire in the direction of the battery of Russian siege guns, or the Turkish redoubt at Grivica, followed by a dull booming like thunder, show that here neither Turk nor Russian is asleep.

† LEFT WING, NEAR THE LOFTCHA ROAD, *Sept 9th, 9 A.M.*—The night passed off quietly enough. About ten o'clock there was a sudden outburst of musketry fire, which lasted a few minutes, and which was probably a false alarm on the part of the Russians or Turks. Then, again, we were awakened about twelve o'clock by loud cheering away somewhere on our left. I jumped up and looked about me. All was darkness, with here and there a fire burning dimly. The stars, and intermittent horizon that seemed like sheet lightning, followed by a heavy boom that in the stillness of the night made the air vibrate strangely. I lay down again, and went to sleep.

This morning the artillery fire began at daybreak all along the line, but in a desultory manner. Just before sunrise there was a sharp musketry fire somewhere down before Radisovo, which lasted perhaps twenty minutes, then ceased. Shortly after sunrise the fusillade began again with violence towards the Loftcha road, but it seemed to come from considerably behind where it should have been, if it were a renewal of the attack of yesterday. The Turks were shelling this place so hotly, probably under the supposition that the trees and Indian corn concealed Russian troops, that I had to decamp. I retired to a point next the ridge, where I still had an excellent view of the two Turkish redoubts in the bend of the Sophia road, the positions where the attack occurred yesterday, and the whole length of the ridge, behind which lies the Loftcha road. I then perceived that, so far from renewing the attack this morning, the Russians had withdrawn in the night from the foot of the slope which leads up to the Turkish

redoubt, and were back on the summit of the mountain or hill whence they had attacked yesterday. This hill or ridge, as it seems from here, is cut in depression of considerable depth, through which the Loftcha road. The Russians on their side of the depression not long perceiving that the Turks were on the other side of the place, where I saw the dragoons first attacking yesterday. Imeretinsky's artillery is where it was yesterday, about a mile back from the present Russian position on the hill, and fully two and a half miles from the redoubt he was attacking yesterday, and which cannot be even to his artillerymen.

Imeretinsky does not seem to have brought a single gun to the attack than this point. The Russians seem to be much afraid of losing their artillery. I have already seen of the unaccountable conduct of their artillery in stopping upon the Turkish redoubts when the attack began, and it ought to have been hottest. I can so far find no explanation for this inaction unless they suddenly ran short of ammunition at that critical moment, for the Russians were never so short of the redoubt as to make it necessary for the artillery to cease firing. The attack was not sustained by the artillery, and begun far too late in the day to succeed. The five o'clock attack, as I said, was led by Skobelev. When I arrived at my new standpoint, there was a lively artillery fight going on between Imeretinsky and the Turkish batteries which had advanced during the night on the hill on the other side of the Loftcha road. Suddenly there arose in front of the hill against the black thunder-cloud which hung over it an immense pyramid of flame, that seemed to rend the sky to the zenith. Then followed a long volume of smoke that rose white as snow against the blackness of the cloud. Then there came a series of startling reports all in a second, as though a battery of a hundred guns had been fired. Then there arose on the Russian hill a long, loud shout. They had exploded a Turkish magazine.

I now learned from an officer here on observation, who was sending reports to General Kriloff every few minutes of the progress of events, that Skobelev was on the ridge before me, and I was about starting to join him, when the sudden din and uproar of battle, like a thunder-clap, held me spell-bound with admiration. The crest of this ridge suddenly began to vomit flame and smoke. Above this ridge, far higher up, were balls of flames that flashed and disappeared, each leaving a small round fleece of white smoke. The Turkish shrapnel exploding over the heads of the Russians.

deafening, and the heavy booming of the distant siege guns slowly pounding away at short regular intervals, as though keeping time, produced a sublime effect. The Turks were in their turn attacking the Russians from the other side, and the Russians had evidently reserved their fire until the Turks were very near, which accounted for the sudden furious outburst. "That Skobeleff," said the officer near me, "how he is giving it to them! and three or four Cossacks watching with intense excitement depicted on their faces, expressed their satisfaction, convinced that he was there in the middle of the fight, with that charmed life of his, ordering and directing

In the meantime the Turkish skirmishers coming from Plevna pushed along our side of the ridge on the other side of the deep ravine, as though going to take Skobeleff in the rear. To day our artillery seems to be more wide awake than yesterday, for a battery now came galloping down through the vines and corn, and unlimbering in a moment, began shelling these skirmishers, while the Turkish redoubt instantly opened on this new battery. The latter, however, paid no attention to the redoubt, but concentrated its whole fire on the skirmishers and, as it was taking them in rear and flank, they soon began to retire. The Turkish shells fired from the redoubt all passed over the battery and exploded in a little hollow behind, about fifty yards to the right of where we were, and all nearly on the same spot. The Turks never seem to correct their aim. In a few minutes the fire began to slacken, and two or three minutes later a loud shout swept along the ridge before us, followed by prolonged cheering. The Turks were evidently beaten back. Then the fire ceased but the shouting continued going farther and farther away. Skobeleff was evidently going at the flying Turks with the bayonet. Now the fighting is over for the present, but the big guns are still pounding away on our right.

The great infantry assault was made by the Russians on the 11th of September, the fifth day of the bombardment. The following letter, the whole of which was transmitted by telegraph, describes the operations directed against the redoubts of the first and second Turkish positions, and the redoubt on the detached mamelon south east of the town, considered by the Russians to be the weakest point of the Turkish line of defence —

* BEFORE PLEVNA, *Tuesday, September 11th.*—I have to record the events of to-day, the results of which it is not possible dispassionately to estimate with the din of battle still ringing in one's ears.

To-day was the fifth day of the bombardment. After the thunder of last night the morning broke with rain, which settled down into a dense mist through which objects were invisible at a distance of one hundred yards. We lost our way several times in riding from the place where we had snatched a few hours' sleep to our old position of the day before on the heights in front of Radisovo, which exposed position the Artillery-General of the 9th Corps, Colonel Wellesley, a Prussian Correspondent, and myself, had all to ourselves.

Affairs did not seem much altered since yesterday. About 10 A.M. the fog lifted somewhat, and let us have a partial view of the scene before us. The guns of the redoubt of the Turkish first position on the central swell still replied to the fire of the Russian batteries in the valley to the east of it. The Grivica Redoubt was still alive, although its fire could not be called brisk. To our left, near the Loftcha-Plevna road, there were occasional bursts of infantry fire, but these were very intermittent, and always died out after a few minutes. The Turks were visible out in the open between their first and second positions, on the central swell, toiling away at spade work under the shell-fire of the Russian batteries. The Russian siege-gun battery near us was occasionally firing over the central swell at the entrenched camps on the northern ridge of the Turkish position, and occasionally throwing shells into the town of Plevna.

Soon after ten almost total silence prevailed, only a single report echoing sullenly among the heights at rare intervals. There grew somehow upon one the impression that this was but the calm before the storm. Of this lull the Turks jauntily took advantage to come out from behind the parapets of the earthworks and stroll about the glacis with the utmost nonchalance. Everybody spoke in whispers, as if afraid or loth to break the universal unnatural stillness, interrupted only feebly by the far-off cannonade and musketry fire of Imeretinsky, round on the extreme left, near the Valley of the Vid. The drizzling fog came down again, and veiled alike friend and foe.

At eleven precisely, a furious musketry fire suddenly burst out on our left. We could judge that it came from the soldiers pushing their way out of the gap through which passes the Loftcha-Plevna road, but the fog hid everything from us. Only the sound told us that the attack must be on the

redoubt on the summit of the isolated mamelon south east of the town of Plevna. It was impossible to see twenty yards in front of one. Everywhere the cannon opened a heavy fire, and their smoke made the obscurity denser. It must be the assault at last, and alas! it is invisible. Louder and louder swells the roll of the hidden musketry. We reckon that Skobelev must be at work down there on our left, but we can hardly discern each other as we lie upon the crest of the ridge. We are in the thick of the din, but we might as well have no eyes.

It is the most mysterious weird situation possible to conceive. It is impossible to tell how the fighting is going. The musketry fire seems to advance but little, but its roll unquestionably swells in volume. The hiddenness of the whole thing is intensely torturing. The thick air above us, as we are lying down, is torn by the whistle of bullets, and the yell and scream of shells. In vain we chafe for the merest glimpse down into the hollow on our left. The thick waves of fog and smoke swathe everything as with a huge dingy pall. The Artillery General is almost mad with irritation at his inability to see anything. We can do nothing, however, but possess our souls in patience, but as the minutes wear on we can discern by ear that the Russians must be gaining ground.

It seems to us here at one moment, to judge by the sound of the firing and of the cheering, that they had actually carried the redoubt on the summit of the isolated mamelon. Will they then assail the redoubts of the central swell, or make a dash for the town of Plevna, or do both? It must be a terrible time for the Turks thus assailed by invisible foes, and in ignorance whence the next blow is to be struck and where it is to fall. So far as I can make out, they seem to be reserving their fire till their foes come to close quarters. As for the Russians although they are firing heavily as they advance, it must be firing at random. It is certain that they can see no enemy. In one sense the fog is an advantage for them because by it they are being somewhat spared in the rush forward. But the sound of their firing must indicate some mark to their enemies, and in the obscurity the directness of their advance must be impaired. The Turks make little response to the furious shell fire of the Russian batteries on their positions perhaps because many of their guns have been *dismounted*, or because they are *short of ammunition*, or because they feel that it would be in a great measure labour lost in the thick fog. We know nothing save that the air is full of noise and of missiles that we are a prey to a suspense which would be insupportable were it not that it must be endured.

About twelve the fog begins to lift, almost as dramatically as it fell. We can see the line of the Turkish northern heights, but the intervening valley is full of dense white smoke. Then presently we get a glimpse into, as it were, the interstices of smoke, and discern the Russian field batteries in the valley, blazing away with all their might at the Turkish first and second positions on the central swell, but the fog and smoke still obstinately hang round and above those positions themselves, and utterly obscure for the time the region of the attack on our left.

At one moment it seems as if the roll of the Russian musketry fire were wavering and receding. Then the sound swells again. There is an evident rally, and the noise moves forward. Just for a moment in the break of the smoke I get a glimpse through the obscurity at the Turkish second position on the central swell, and note that its cannon, disregarding the Russian fire poured into it, are firing hard in the direction of the hostile musketry fire. So mysterious is the situation that a Russian officer sitting by us starts the theory that it is an attack not by the Russians at all, but by the Turks; and it is certainly impossible to adduce any evidence to the contrary. We can make nothing of it, and are fain, in the language of Lord Dundreary, to give it up.

One thing is certain now, as the time passes on, that if the sound of firing be any indication, the infantry fighting has a tendency to retrograde from the Turkish front. It is coming nearer and nearer to us, and if it indeed be an attack on the part of the Turks they are storming the western verge of the ridge on which we lie. In utter desperation we abandon our position, walk westward along the ridge farther to our left, and nearer to the fighting just above the western edge of the village of Radisovo, exactly along the space held by Schahofskoy's staff as forepost line on the night of the 30th July. I found several batteries of Russian field artillery of the 31st Division in steady action against the first and second Turkish position on the central swell, and only a little to the right and rear of the infantry men still engaged in desultory fighting, as evidenced by the maintenance of a dropping fire.

The colonel in command of the battery told us with an assumption of indifference, which I am sure was feigned, that the fighting dying out was merely forepost work, to clear the way for the grand assault against the redoubt on the isolated mamelon, which was to be made in the afternoon. He may, indeed, have believed what he said, but another tale was told, when for an instant a sharp eddy of wind blew fog and smoke away from the mamelon and slopes leading up. There was

no fighting there now, but with my glass I could discern the Russian dead and wounded lying about sadly thick. As for the Turks, some of them were dispersed at random, in among the wounded on the slopes. We could divine their fell purpose. Successive bodies of Turks were streaming down the slope of the mamelon against the huddled mass of Russians retiring seemingly on their shelter trenches athwart the mouth of the road ravine and ascending the slopes to our immediate right. There could be but one inference, that the Russian infantry had unsuccessfully assailed the mamelon redoubt, and that its garrison was taking the counter offensive. It was also clear that Skobeleff had attacked the redoubt and covered way due east from the isolated mamelon. My artillery friend stated further that all the four pounders of his division had been sent to the left on towards the Sophia road with intent, he believed, to hinder the Turks from any attempt to retreat in that direction, an attempt which did not seem to be probable. It was edifying to witness the composure with which those soldiers of the battery who were off duty slept steadily while the cannon were being fired close to their ears, and while the shells were whistling over their heads.

Anxious to command the position a little more fully, we went yet farther to the left on the extreme westward peak of the Radisovo ridge, and thence, since the fog had now in a great measure cleared away, we looked down upon the whole scene. A regiment of the 16th Division was languidly plying its musketry fire down the valley traversed by the Loftcha-Plevna road, and appeared to have half a mind to emerge therefrom for the purpose of attacking again the redoubt on the isolated mamelon. But the place was scored by the Turkish shelter trenches, and the Turks there blazed away, steadily but not ardently. Near to us the skirmishers of a brigade of the 30th Division were dodging their way down to the base of the south eastern face of the mamelon. This was at two o'clock, and for nearly two hours little forepost affairs of no consequence went on.

Evening—I spent the greater portion of the afternoon in and about the battery on the height directly in front of Radisovo. This battery was on the extreme left of Krudener's position, and points its fire partly against the redoubts of the first and second Turkish positions and partly against the redoubt on the detached mamelon south east of the town. It was this last redoubt which the Russian chiefs clearly considered the weakest point of the Turkish position. The heavy firing at eleven o'clock on our left,

which the artillery colonel told me had been mere forepost work, was in reality an assault on this redoubt by three regiments of the 4th Corps, pushed home in the fog right up to the Turkish shelter-trenches outside the ditch of the redoubt. In spite of the spirit with which the attack was made it failed, and Kriloff's men had to fall back up the valley traversed by the Loftcha-Plevna road, and on to the slopes over against the Turkish redoubt. I also learned that a curious order had been given to all the artillery to fire each alternate hour hard and gently.

It was observable from this elevation that the Roumanian cannon on our right had actually passed by the Grivica Redoubt still held by the Turks, and had come into action against the redoubts on the central swell, with the two guns left in the Grivica Redoubt as armament, firing into their rear. This was gallant but inexplicable till one learned that the redoubt and the entrenched camp behind it were full of Turkish infantry. To anticipate, let me state that these at sundown compelled the Roumanian guns to retire in a line with the village of Grivica. At half-past three all the Russian batteries began to fire with great swiftness, and continued till it was necessary for the gunners to hold their hand, lest the missiles should fall among the Russian stormers once more assaulting the redoubt on the detached mamelon of which I have already spoken.

At four o'clock a mass of infantry in loose order, preceded by a skirmishing line, and followed by supports and reserves, came up out of the chaussée valley, drove the Turks out of their shelter-trenches at the foot of the mamelon, and pressed on vivaciously up its southern slope. This was a Brigade, or thereabouts, of the 16th Division. Simultaneously, down the slopes of the heights which are a prolongation of that on which we stood, another Brigade advanced. This one belonged to the 30th Division. The Brigade crossed the intervening valley at full speed, and began to advance up the south-eastern and eastern sections of the slope of the mamelon, while on the lower slopes they hung somewhat, and it seemed did not quite like the work cut out for them. They extended to the right under shelter, and then after a moment's lingering the skirmishing line dashed out of shelter and began swiftly to ascend the wide natural glacis lying below the redoubt. This glacis was already dotted with the dead of the morning.

The mass deploying steadily, followed the skirmishers, with the supports behind them, the reserves lying down under shelter behind. At that moment the shell-fire from the guns of the

first and second Turkish positions crashed in among the advancing Russians. From tier above tier of continuous shelter trenches lining the outside of the ditch of the redoubt streamed a torrent of musketry fire from the Turkish infantry lining them. Still the Russians laboured doggedly onwards and upwards in the teeth of these impediments. But the slope was steep, and the ground slippery from the drizzling rain. Just at this moment we descried at first a slender column, then heavier, on the edge of the reverse slope of the mamelon, making for the redoubt from the direction opposite to the Russian advance. This proved to be Turkish reinforcements coming up to strengthen the garrison of the redoubt. To deal with this new enemy on the right flank, the Russians with great promptitude threw back their right, the soldiers lying down and firing into the advancing Turks, while the mass, with which the supports had by this time mingled, pressed on towards the Turkish shelter trenches outside the redoubt.

Here for the first time came ringing back to us, through the thick moist air, the volleys of Russian cheers. That the leaders with that cheer actually gained the first Turkish shelter-trench, I can testify from my own eyesight. For about five minutes the fate of the redoubt hung in the balance. Then, tortured by the fire on the front and flank, the Russians began to fall back, at first slowly, but presently at a run. The reserves took no part in the attack.

The Russians had fallen fast as they advanced. Perhaps they fell faster as they retired. The Turkish infantry promptly followed up their advantage, sallying out with flaming volleys down the slope after the Russians, and driving them to the shelter of their own trenches over ground studded with Russian dead and wounded. The second assault was thus, like the first, a failure, and as the dusk was coming on I anticipated no more fighting for the day, and was walking back out of the exposed battery to find my horse and ride to such shelter as the battle field affords. The Turkish infantry, regardless of the fire of the Russian batteries, were streaming into their redoubts for night duty. The artillery fire was gradually waning. Suddenly it swelled again. Yet another desperate effort, followed hard on the last, was in course of being made, on that stubborn isolated redoubt there.

The troops engaged were three fresh regiments drawn from the same divisions as those composing the previous attacking force. The previous attack from the opening to the finish had occupied just half an hour. This one was disposed of in the gloaming in a similar manner after twenty minutes. The

mamelon redoubt of the Turkish Plevna position remains intact.

The Emperor with the Grand Duke was on the battle-field till nine o'clock. Of the Russian losses I know no details, but they must have been heavy. Many of the wounded cannot be removed. The weather is abominable. There was about sundown hard fighting around the Grivica Redoubt, and it is reported to have been taken.

September 12th, morning.—The Emperor returned to headquarters here late last night. The battle-field of the last five days is silent this morning. There is a talk of submitting the Turkish Plevna position to a regular siege, sapping up to the redoubts, while a close blockage is instituted, with intent to starve Osman Pacha's army. The villages enclosed within his lines are full of supplies for the simple wants of the Turkish soldiers, and the fields groan with heavy crops of maize. The losses this morning are spoken of here as about 5,000 to 6,000, but there are no details. The Grivica Redoubt was taken yesterday after sundown.

The Emperor this morning has gone back to the battle-field to visit his soldiers.

The subjoined letter, in which the same great battle is described by another Correspondent, relates chiefly to Kriloff's repulse, and to Skobeleff's capture of the double redoubt, with his subsequent repulse after a terrible struggle and with enormous losses:—

† *LEFT WING, LOFTCHA ROAD, September 12th.*—I was with General Zotoff when the battle of Tuesday began. It was eleven o'clock. The General and his staff were on the ridge behind Radisovo. They had just lunched. A moderate artillery fire was going on, and the General had informed me that the attack would begin between two and three o'clock, when suddenly a lively fire was heard on the skirmish line away to the left in the direction of the Loftcha road, followed by a heavy fusillade, which soon swept the road to the foot of the Radisovo ridge, and streamed up its crest nearly to Radisovo itself.

Everybody was surprised. General Zotoff looked at his watch and said, "It's not yet time. What can it be?" Mounting my horse I rode down the ridge behind Radisovo, where the fire seemed raging hottest, to try and make out what was going on. For some time it was impossible to ascertain

the fog and
it was only
be judged

1 or nearly an hour General Zolton did not learn what it was or how it had begun. As the time for the Russian attack had been fixed for between two and three o'clock, it was soon evident that it must be a Turkish attack, and as I afterwards ascertained, it began in this wise:

Skobelev and Imeretinsky, in order to begin the attack on their side upon the redoubt, had to advance their troops on to the hill immediately fronting the redoubts in the bend of the Sophia road. It was from this hill that the attack had been made upon Skobelev four days before, and the hill had since been abandoned by the Turks except a few skirmishers. Skobelev advanced at eleven o'clock to take possession of this hill. The Turks immediately opened fire upon him. This was the beginning of it. I have not yet been able to learn whether the Turks meant a general attack upon the whole Russian line, or whether it was a sudden movement caused by Skobelev's advance. At any rate, the Turkish attack spread from the Loftcha road over Plevna, and up the Radisovo ridge, a position which has already been described. In the middle of this ridge is a low hill or hump. From this point down to the end of the ridge, which is scarcely a mile from Plevna, the Russians had planted twenty-eight guns, the greater part of which were not more than 1,000 or 1,200 yards from the Turkish redoubts and trenches, and were a continual menace and danger to the Turks. It seems that they had suddenly decided to try and carry the Radisovo ridge, and the attack here was directed principally against the hump or hill already spoken of, opposite one of their own redoubts. It was impossible, owing to the fog and smoke, to see the position of the combatants on either side. The fight lasted until nearly two o'clock. The Turks made three attacks upon Skobelev, which were successfully repulsed, and two on the Radisovo ridge.

The three fights with Skobelev were short, quick, and sharp, neither lasting more than five or ten minutes. This was owing to Skobelev's manner of defence. He ordered his troops to reserve their fire until the Turks came within a hundred yards, then to open upon them a sudden and terrible fusillade against which no troops could stand. This drove them back almost immediately. Three times they came to the charge, and three times were they repulsed in the same sudden and furious manner.

The two attacks upon the Radisovo ridge lasted longer, and

fog changing its colour, the crash of musketry and the thunder of artillery Here is what I saw

A little to my right, where General Kriloff attacked the redoubts down near Plevna, invisible from the point where my colleague took his stand, the fire had been raging with fury for nearly two hours, a steady, continuous roll and crash, intermingled with the louder thunder of cannon, which filled the air with the uproar of the bullets and shells During all this time there was little to be seen along the crest of the Radisovo ridge, where the Russian guns could be perceived at work, with figures flitting round them, dimly seen through the smoke, strangely magnified by the intervention of the fog, until the gunners appeared like giants, and the guns themselves, enlarged and distorted by the same medium, appeared like huge uncouth monsters, from whose throats at every instant leaped forth globes of flame There were moments when these flashes seemed to light up everything around them Then the guns and gunners appeared for an instant with fearful distinctness, red and lurid, as though tinged with blood Then they sank back again in shadowy indistinctness The uproar of the battle rose and swelled until it became fearful to hear—like the continuous roar of an angry sea beating against a rock bound coast, combined with that of a thunder storm, with the strange unearthly sounds heard on board a ship when labouring in a gale

This terrible storm of battle continued without ceasing for nearly two hours The Russian guns were pouring their fire into the redoubt, and the Russian infantry into the trenches, while the attacking columns were advancing cautiously under cover of the smoke and fog and standing corn to get a position as near as possible before making the final rush At about five o'clock the smoke lifted again, carried away by a gust of wind At this moment I saw before the redoubt, down near Plevna, a mass of Russian soldiers rise up in a field of Indian corn, and push forward with a shout The Turkish fire just then seemed to have been dominated, nearly silenced, by the terrible storm of shot and shell poured in by the Russians The moment seemed favourable for the assault Either the Turks were abandoning these redoubts or they were lying behind the parapet awaiting the attack Which was it? we asked The question was soon answered The Russian shout had scarcely died away when there flashed along the parapet of the redoubt a stream of fire that swayed backwards and forwards, while the smoke rose over the redoubt in one heavy white mass One continuous crash filled the air with bullets, from which to the spectator

looking on it did not seem possible for escape.

Into this storm of bullets plunged the Russians as though of joy, and then disappeared and for the moment were lost to view. They again, disappeared in the low ground of the glacis, rushing onward as though the bullets were pellets; but, alas! sadly diminished in number. It was impossible for them to reach the parapet? It was flesh and blood to break that circle of fire, and utterly out of the question. Did but one man find his billet, not one of these gallant fellows could get through that cornfield. While waiting in this little hollow, my excitement was so great that I trembled so, that I could not hold the fire, and for the moment was obliged to retire. They were evidently very near the redoubt, and could do it. Victory was almost within their grasp, but required a fresh accession of strength; from behind; another wave coming to give the first impetus to carry the first up over the glacis, and perhaps a third, each bringing reinforcements of strength. I looked for this wave of reinforcements to see if reinforcements were coming up—doing anything to help the gallant fellows against that circle of fire.

I looked in vain. My heart sank within me at this bravery, all this loss of life, would have been nothing if these poor fellows were madly fighting hundreds in a desperate struggle—well, but they were trembling in the balance—not a man was left. They were left to die overwhelmed, broken, and was sublime, and was pitiful. I see a few men up the glacis one by one. They drop, and are followed, and here they come again, and here they come, human beings rushing madly back across the field, more than half of those who went forward. A few remnants was seen flying back—broken, disarmed, and battalions were sent to pick them up, and to the assault. Two more battalions! I have sent a corporal and two more men, and the reinforcements were what was required, and the Russians sent at the moment when that mass of men

would have gone into the redoubt together. Instead of this, General Kriloff sent two battalions, and that when it was too late. The poor fellows went over the hill singing gaily, and disappeared in the fog and smoke. I could have cried for pity, for I knew that most of them went uselessly to simple slaughter. It was impossible for these fresh battalions to renew the assault with the slightest chance of success. These two battalions, like the rest, were doomed to almost certain destruction.

The fog again settled down over the redoubt, hiding Turks and Russians alike. I could tell by that fearful rifle fire that they were going at it again, and I turned away. Soon the cessation of firing told that it was all over, but the second attack was more easily repulsed than the first, and I perceived likewise that the whole Russian attack made from the Radisovo ridge by Krudener and Kriloff was repulsed all along the line. It was inevitable, I foresaw it from the first. The mistake was made and repeated continually by the Russians of sending too few men against such positions, according to old rules made before breech loading days. In those days a fixed number of men were considered enough to carry a position and sending more was only increasing the chances of loss without increasing the chances of success, but the number required to carry a position defended by breech loaders is about four or five times as great as against muzzle loaders—a fact which the Russians have not yet learned, but which is all the more important when the breech loaders are in the hands of soldiers like the Turks.

I will now relate the events which occurred on the Russian extreme left, commanded by Prince Imeretinsky and General Skobelev. Here the attack was conducted in a very different manner. While the battle was raging in front and to the right of me, it raged with no less fury round the redoubts and on the other side of the Loftcha road, but up to the moment of the second repulse of Kriloff, Skobelev had not yet made his assault. He had well prepared the ground, however. At four o'clock he had brought down twenty pieces of artillery to the spur of the ridge overlooking Plevna. Not more than a thousand yards distant from the redoubt I saw an immense volume of smoke rising, and heard a terrible thunder, which was not more than five or six hundred yards away on my left. It was evident that Skobelev, *risking his artillery in this advanced position*, was determined to make a desperate effort to capture the redoubt in front of him.

I have already described the positions here, and now only need

refer to them to make the description understood. The redoubt Skobelev was attacking was a double redoubt in the bend of the Loftcha road down near Plevna. He had advanced his troops down the slope of the mountain to within easy range: As the Turks immediately opened fire upon him from the redoubt he returned the fire with steadiness and precision, putting his men under cover as much as possible, his cannon pouring a steady stream of shell and canister into the redoubt as well. In fact he worked his cannon so much that several pieces have been spoiled. He had evidently determined to risk everything to capture this redoubt, and if Plevna were not taken it would not be his fault. For three hours he kept up this fire, and just after Kriloff's second repulse, the Turkish fire having somewhat relaxed, dominated by the Russian, he thought the moment had come for making the assault.

He had four regiments of the line, and four battalions of sharpshooters. Still keeping up his murderous fire, he formed under its cover two regiments in the little hollow at the foot of the low hill on which was built the redoubt, together with two battalions of sharpshooters, not more than twelve hundred yards from the scarp. Then placing himself in the best position for watching the result, he ceased fire and ordered the advance. He ordered the assaulting party not to fire, and they rushed forward with their guns on their shoulders, with music playing and banners flying, and disappeared in the fog and smoke. Skobelev is the only general who places himself near enough to feel the pulse of a battle. The advancing column was indistinctly seen, a dark mass in the fog and smoke. Feeling, as it were, every throb of the battle, he saw this line begin to waver and hesitate. Upon the instant he hurled forward a rival regiment to support, and again watched the result. This new force carried the mass farther on with its momentum, but the Turkish redoubt flamed and smoked, and poured forth such a torrent of bullets that the line was again shaken. Skobelev stood in this shower of balls unhurt. All his escort were killed or wounded, even to the little Kirghiz, who received a bullet in the shoulder. Again he saw the line hesitate and waver, and he flung his fourth and last regiment, the Libansky, on the glacis. Again this new wave carried the preceding ones forward, until they were almost on the scarp; but that deadly shower of bullets poured upon them; men dropped by hundreds, and the result still remained doubtful. The line once more wavered and hesitated. Not a moment was to be lost, if the redoubt was to be carried.

Skobelev had now only two battalions of sharpshooters left, the best in his detachments. Putting himself at the head of these, he dashed forward on horseback. He picked up the stragglers, he reached the wavering, fluctuating mass, and gave it the inspiration of his own courage and instruction. He picked the whole mass up and carried it forward with a rush and a cheer. The whole redoubt was a mass of flame and smoke from which screams, shouts, and cries of agony and defiance arose, with the deep mouthed bellowing of the cannon, and above all the steady, awful crash of that deadly rifle fire. Skobelev's sword was cut in two in the middle. Then a moment later, when just on the point of leaping the ditch, horse and man rolled together to the ground, the horse dead or wounded, the rider untouched. Skobelev sprang to his feet with a shout, then with a formidable, savage yell the whole mass of men streamed over the ditch, over the scarp and counter scarp, over the parapet and swept into the redoubt like a hurricane. Their bayonets made short work of the Turks still remaining. Then a joyous cheer told that the redoubt was captured and that at last one of the defences of Plevna was in the hands of the Russians.

Having seen as much as I have seen of the Turkish infantry fire from behind trenches and walls, I thought it was beyond flesh and blood to break it—a belief which had been strengthened by Kniloff's repulse, which I had just witnessed. Skobelev proved the contrary, but at what a sacrifice! In that short rush of a few hundred yards three thousand men had been left on the hill side on the glacis the scarp, and the ditch—one fourth of his whole force. I believe that Skobelev looks upon such attacks upon such positions as almost criminal, and disapproved highly the whole plan of attack on Plevna, but he believes that if an attack is to be made it can only be done in this manner, and that, although the loss of men may be great, it is better that the loss should be incurred and the victory won, than half the loss with a certainty of defeat. Skobelev seems to be the only one among the Russian generals who has studied the American war with profit. He knows it by heart and it will be seen by those who have studied the great civil war, that in this assault Skobelev followed the plan of the American generals on both sides when attempting to carry such positions, to follow up the assaulting column with fresh troops without waiting for the first column to be repulsed. If the position proves too strong for the first column, then reinforcements are at hand before they have time to break and run.

Skobelev had the redoubt. The question now was how to hold

it. It was dominated by the redoubt of Krishine on the left already spoken of. It was exposed at the Plevna side to the fire of the sharpshooters, and to the Turkish forces in the wood bordering on the Sophia road, and open to the fire of the entrenched camp. There was a cross fire coming from three different points. At daylight next morning the Turks opened fire from all sides. The distance from the redoubt at Krishine had of course been accurately measured, and the guns dropped shells into the redoubt with the utmost precision on the exposed sides. The back of the redoubt was a solid rock on which it was impossible to erect a parapet. All the earth had been used for the construction of the parapets on the other side. It was evident that the position was untenable unless the entrenched camp on the other side of the Plevna and the Krishine Redoubt could be taken. Skobelev renewed his demand for reinforcements made the evening before. Although his losses had been great, the spirit of his troops was so good that with another regiment he was willing to undertake to capture the redoubt and the entrenched camp, or he would undertake to hold the positions until something could be attempted in some other quarter. Could one or two more positions be carried during Wednesday, say the Krishine Redoubt, and one entrenched camp on the same ridge as the Grivica Redoubt, the fall of Plevna might be considered certain. At sunrise the Turks began an attack upon the captured redoubt, and the storm of battle again raged with fury here while all was quiet everywhere else. The desperate attack of the Turks was repulsed. Another attack was made and another repulse, and this continued all day long, until the Turks had attacked and been beaten five successive times.

The Russian losses were becoming fearful. General Skobelev had lost, he thinks, 2,000 men in attacking the redoubt. By the afternoon he had lost 3,000 more in holding it, while his battalions shrivelled up and shrank away as if by magic. One battalion of sharpshooters had been reduced to 160 men. A company which had been 150 was now forty. An immense proportion of officers were killed, or wounded only. Only one commander of a regiment is alive; scarcely a head of a battalion is left. Two officers of the staff are killed, one of whom was Verastchagine, brother of the great artist. Another brother was wounded. General Dobrovolsky, commander of sharpshooters, was killed. One officer was blown to pieces by the explosion of a caisson. Captain Kurapatkin, chief of the staff, standing beside this officer, had his hair singed and suffered a severe contusion. Only General

Skobelev himself remained untouched. He seems to bear a charmed life. He visited the redoubt three or four times during the day, encouraging the soldiers, telling them help would soon arrive, Plevna would soon be taken, victory would soon crown their efforts, telling them it was the final decisive blow struck for their country, for the honour and glory of the Russian arms, and they always replied with the same cheery shouts, while their numbers were dwindling away by hundreds. He again and again sent for reinforcements, and again and again informed the Commander-in-Chief that the position was untenable. The afternoon wore away and no reinforcements came.

General Levitsky, as I have been informed, formally refused reinforcements, either because he thought the position, in spite of General Skobelev's representations, was tenable or because he had no reinforcements to give. General Kriloff, on his own responsibility, sent the remnant of a regiment which had attacked the redoubt, which I saw rush forward and then back through the Indian cornfield. Of the 2,500 there were barely 1,000 left, so it was utterly incapable of going into action that day, and even this regiment arrived too late. General Skobelev had left the redoubt at four o'clock to go to his tent on a woody hill opposite. He had been there scarcely an hour when he was informed that the Turks were again attacking the right flank on the Loftcha road immediately above Plevna. He galloped forward to see, and was met by an orderly with the news that the Turks were also attacking the redoubt a sixth time. He dashed forward towards the redoubt in hopes of reaching it in time, but was met by a stream of his own men flying back. They were exhausted by forty-eight hours' incessant fighting, and were worn out, hungry, and dying of thirst and fatigue. Owing to the inactivity of the Russians during the day, the Turks had been enabled to collect an overwhelming force, which had made one last desperate effort and had succeeded in driving Skobelev's force out. One bastion was held till the last by a young officer, whose name I regret I have forgotten, with a handful of men. They refused to fly, and were slaughtered last man.

Just after this that I met General Skobelev, the first day. He was in a fearful state of excitement and his uniform was covered with mud and filth, his belt, his Cross of St. George twisted round on his chest, his face black with powder and smoke, his eyes bloodshot, his voice quite gone. He spoke of never having seen such a picture of

attle as he presented. I saw him again in his tent at night. He was quite calm and collected. He said, "I have done my best: I could do no more. My detachment is half destroyed; my regiments do not exist; I have no officers left; they sent me no reinforcements, and I have lost three guns." They were three of the four guns which he placed in the redoubt upon taking it, only one of which his retreating troops had been able to carry off. "Why did they refuse you reinforcements?" I asked. "Who was to blame?" "I blame nobody," he replied. "It is the will of God."

BUCHAREST, *September 14th.*—I left the battle-field before Plevna at noon yesterday. The two redoubts taken by General Skobelev on Monday evening were held by him for twenty-four hours. During Tuesday the Turks made six attacks, and finally, about six o'clock in the evening, drove him out. He lost three cannon which he had placed in the redoubt. He asked for reinforcements several times, but General Levitsky refused them, thinking Skobelev had enough men to hold the redoubt. Finally, General Kriloff, on his own responsibility, sent the remnant of a regiment which had attacked the lower redoubt near Plevna, and whose effective strength was reduced to 1,000 men utterly unfit to go into battle. Even this regiment arrived a few minutes too late, and another regiment sent from the Headquarter Staff to reinforce him arrived when Skobelev had already retreated. The loss of this redoubt is disastrous for the Russian attack, as it seems that the Russians in possession of these two redoubts and the Grivica Redoubt had counted upon recommencing the offensive immediately. This is now impossible until the arrival of reinforcements. When I left the battle-field all was quiet except a light artillery fire. The Russians are still in possession of the Grivica Redoubt, which was under a continual heavy fire from the Turks. This redoubt was visited by Colonel Wellesley, who says it is heaped full of dead Russians and Roumanians.

The campaign against Plevna has been a severe one for Correspondents. A Correspondent, the brother of the famous artist, Verastchagine, has been killed. The great artist himself, as is well known, is seriously wounded. Two more Correspondents—one representing the *Scotsman*, and the other the *St. Petersburg Exchange Gazette*—have been wounded; while others—nearly all—come back seriously ill, or completely knocked up. A Correspondent of the *Times* has succumbed to the unhealthy weather. The day the attack began on Plevna he was for several hours at the point of

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It was just after this that I met General Skobelev, the first time that day. He was in a fearful state of excitement and fear. His uniform was covered with mud and filth, his sword broken, his Cross of St George twisted round on his shoulder, his face black with powder and smoke, his eyes haggard and blood-shot, and his voice quite gone. He spoke in a hoarse whisper. I never before saw such a picture of

battle as he presented. I saw him again in his tent at night. He was quite calm and collected. He said, "I have done my best; I could do no more. My detachment is half destroyed; my regiments do not exist; I have no officers left; they sent me no reinforcements, and I have lost three guns." They were three of the four guns which he placed in the redoubt upon taking it, only one of which his retreating troops had been able to carry off. "Why did they refuse you reinforcements?" I asked. "Who was to blame?" "I blame nobody," he replied. "It is the will of God."

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death, but happily now is out of danger. Lieutenant von Huhn, a Prussian Military Correspondent for a German paper, has just returned very ill. Severe though the campaign has been to Correspondents, it has not been so fatal as that of Servia, in which, out of twenty who were at the front, three were killed and one wounded.

The following letter describes the taking of the Grivica Redoubt —

* BUCHAREST, *September 14th* — A friend whom I left at the Plevna front has been kind enough to forward to me the following particulars of a later date than my last despatch covered. He writes from Poradim on the evening of the 12th —

As you may remember, when we rode to the rear last night, we saw no reason to doubt that the Grivica Redoubt was still in Turkish hands, knowing as we did that the assault made upon it at three o'clock had been repulsed, and we set down the smoke rising round below it to an attempt on the part of the Turks to drive back the Roumanian artillery which had passed the redoubt, and were in action absolutely in its front. In reality, however, the Grivica Redoubt fell last night before the determined bravery of the Roumanians. I forward you detailed information concerning the protracted struggle.

It appears that at half past two P.M. the redoubt was attacked by two Roumanian brigades, each consisting of four battalions, and three battalions of Russians. The Roumanians attacked from the east and south east, the Russians from the south and south west. The attack was made in the following manner — First a line of skirmishers, with men carrying scaling ladders, gabions, and fascines among them. The latter had their rifles slung on their backs, and were ordered in no case to fire, but merely to run forward, fill up the ditch, and place their ladders behind. Then followed the second line in company column formation for the attack followed by the third line to support the assault.

At half-past four —

it is so

too late

retire — only two companies of infantry, which rallied, and, keeping under cover, maintained a brisk fire against the work.

At half past five the attack was renewed by a battalion of the Roumanian Militia, followed by two Russian battalions of the 17th and 18th Regiments. The redoubt was then carried,

and the Turks withdrew to the other redoubt, a little to the north of the captured work. But it was soon apparent that the redoubt could not be held without reinforcements, and three Roumanian battalions; with a battery of artillery, were ordered forward. They lost their way, however, in the fog, and were thus precluded from rendering the required assistance, consequently when the Turks returned to the attack the allies were driven out.

The third assault soon followed, and the work was finally captured at seven P.M. Four guns and a standard were the trophies of the feat of arms. More than once during the night did the Turks advance with shouts of "Allah!" but no serious attack was made. Thus, to my surprise, when I reached the Plevna Valley this morning, I beheld a flag-staff up, defiantly exposing the Roumanian flag, in that hitherto dreaded Grivica Redoubt. I was given to understand that preparations were in progress for an attack on the Turkish entrenched camp on the Turkish northern ridge about 2,000 metres west of the Grivica Redoubt.

I found the village of Grivica full of ambulance waggons and wounded-bearers, and in a line running from the top of the hill in front of the redoubt down into the valley in front of the village was a line of field batteries just coming into action. In the rear of the village, and also lying down the slope of the hill, was a line of Roumanian infantry under the shelter of the cover-trenches; and in their rear again was a reserve of field batteries. The infantry force in this advanced line amounted in all to about 4,000 Roumanian troops.

By this time it was past ten o'clock. As the position we occupied yesterday on the height above Radisovo had the double advantage of the best view of any assault on the entrenched camp opposite, and also of anything occurring on the Russian left flank nearer Plevna, I rode thither, passing under a very heavy cross fire as I traversed the valley and the way between the Turkish and Russian batteries. Reaching the Russian positions, I rode along the reverse slope of the Radisovo height until I came behind our old observatory of yesterday, and I remounted the ridge to find our old friend Krüdener's left flank battery still in position. Just before I arrived a shell from this battery had caused a great explosion in the redoubt forming the second Turkish position on the central swell, much to my intense regret that I was not in time to see this fortunate shot. Having satisfied myself that I might safely push on a little nearer Plevna without missing the attack on the Turkish entrenched camp opposite, I made

my way still farther to the left to the tree beneath which we yesterday witnessed the Russian unsuccessful assaults on the Turkish mamelon redoubt. The guns of Imeretinsky and Skobelev which half encircle the western half of the valley, were pounding away as yesterday, but did not appear to have made much advance, if any. There soon, however, became visible a long line of fitful puffs of bluish smoke out of the wood which faces the covered way connecting the two redoubts covering the town towards the south west. This rifle fire was speedily answered by a line of Turkish fire from behind the covered way, as well as a hot fire from some shelter trenches in the middle of the valley which separated the combatants.

Having watched this apparently harmless duel for some time, we came under the notice of the Turkish skirmishers in the valley too closely to render it advisable to remain here any longer. I therefore remounted and returned east along the reverse flank of the Radisovo height with intent to cross the valley, and if possible get into the Grivica Redoubt. On my way every now and then I had a glimpse of the slowly progressing, or indeed almost stationary, attack on the Turkish entrenched camp opposite. I descended the slope into the valley, crossed it, and made my way up through the village of Grivica towards the redoubt. On mounting the plateau above I soon found myself under cover of the transverse hillock running down into the valley from the height above, and sheltered behind it from the fire of the Turkish camp were massed a few battalions of Roumanians, with a battery or two, constituting the reserves intended to support the attack on the entrenched camp.

I was here told that it would be impossible to ride up into the redoubt, for as soon as I left the covered way by the hillock I should come on to an open gap between it and the redoubt, which is continually swept by two Turkish guns. Intent on persevering, I observed a short way off a ditch running up the hill in the direction of the redoubt. This I determined to avail myself of as far as it reached, and leaving my horse, I commenced my way up the ditch, which was filled with Roumanian infantry. After meandering about in all directions I found that the ditch soon ended in a cul de sac. Between me and the redoubt, a distance of about six hundred yards, there was a small Roumanian battery, and for this I ran at speed, the ground I traversed being literally strewn with dead Roumanians and Russians. The fire seemed to become heavier as I neared the battery, which, however, I reached in safety. There was nothing for it now but to commence

running again as soon as I had caught my breath in the little battery. The Roumanian officers squatting in the entrance of the redoubt shouted to me to run in their direction. This I did, and was thankful when, in rushing in among them, and picking my way through the dead, they pulled me down to the ground and made me squat beside them for security against the continuous shower of lead.

I had now time to look about me, and examine the work. It has a ditch all round it, and the parapets are high and thick. The only entrance, curiously enough, is a narrow opening facing to the south, it having been constructed for defence towards the north. Presently I asked leave to enter the redoubt, which was granted with the advice to make a bolt of it, as there was a dangerous corner to pass. This I did, and pray I may be spared ever again witnessing the sight which met my eyes.

The interior of this large work was piled up not only with dead, but with wounded, forming one ghastly undistinguishable mass of dead and living bodies, the wounded being as little heeded as the dead. The fire had hindered the doctors from coming up to attend to the wounded, and the same cause had kept back the wounded-bearers. There were not even comrades to moisten the lips of their wretched fellow-soldiers, or give them a word of consolation. There they lie writhing and groaning. I think some attempt might have been made, at whatever risk, to aid these poor fellows, for they were the gallant men who twenty-four hours before had so valiantly and successfully struggled for the conquest of that long uncaptured redoubt, and it was sad now to see them dying without any attempt being made to attend to them.

I could fill pages with a description of this harrowing scene and others near it which I witnessed, but the task would be equally a strain on my own nerves and on those of your readers. I am aware that Colonel Wellesley, the English military attaché, having visited this redoubt and witnessed the spectacle it presented, spoke of it to a Roumanian officer, who explained that the doctors were obliged to take cases in the order of their occurrence, and since the Roumanians had suffered not a little two days before, the doctors had still not been released from their attention upon those early cases.

In the centre of the redoubt is a kind of traverse and a curious covered corridor runs around it. In this I imagine the Turks sought protection from the shells which fell into it uninterruptedly for so many days before its capture. An incessant rain of bullets poured over the work as I made my way over the bodies on the ground. I was naturally deeply interested

to know whence the Turks were firing, and having reached the parapet I crawled up, and taking off my cap, peeped over. To my immense astonishment I saw another Turkish redoubt not more than two hundred and fifty yards from us, to the north west, from which this fire was being maintained. The Roumanians, it appears, had failed to capture this redoubt yesterday, but it is absolutely necessary that they should become masters of it, as their position is rendered almost untenable by its remaining in the hands of the Turks. The fire had not diminished as I returned from the redoubt down hill towards the village, and the Correspondent of the *Scotsman*, who had joined me, was struck by a bullet on the ankle which luckily did little harm, only grazing the ankle bone.

We rested a little behind the hillock where the Roumanian reserves were lying, and then pushed back in order to see what progress was being made, towards the Turkish entrenched camp. We had scarcely left the Roumanians when a tremendous Turkish shrapnell fire which scorching most thoroughly the reverse slope of the hill where they were, was opened against them and maintained until they were compelled slightly to change their position, and the skirmish line had also to fall back. Since by this time it was 6 P.M., I knew that the attack had been abandoned for that day, and therefore returned to quarters.

The Russians estimate their losses on the 11th at 125 officers and 5,000 men. I estimate the Grivica losses at about 1,500 killed and wounded.

* **BLCHAFFST, September 17th**—It is incomprehensible to me that nobody in England appears to realize that the third Battle of Plevna was in effect fought out on Tuesday, the 11th inst., and that the Russian failure was then consummated in virtue of the defeat of the successive Russian assaults on the redoubt crowning the mamelon to the south east of the town.

These assaults, categorically described by me, were the important and crucial events of the day. The mamelon redoubt is the key to the position. The Russians were free to choose their own time for the attack. It was open to them to make the attack with the strength which seemed to them most appropriate. They attacked three times during the day, and failed. Can the hope, then, be strong, that it is possible for them ever to succeed?

The Russian official telegrams are by no means joyous documents, as assuredly they would have been had any sub-

stantial success been won. The Russians were definitely thwarted, and finally paralyzed on the 11th instant.

I find, nevertheless, the English journals up to the 15th instant so utterly ignoring the reality as to write of the Russian partial successes. The Russians have lost before Plevna this time more than 20,000 men. For the first time in my knowledge has the work overwhelmed the Russian medical and sanitary staff, and great numbers of the wounded are literally rotting and festering unfed, their wounds undressed, their cleanliness disregarded. As for the Roumanian army, its surgical arrangements are utterly inadequate. The surgeons make no concealment of the grim fact that a wounded man's time for being looked at comes on an average two days after he has been struck.

The Russo-Roumanian army has abandoned now even the pretence of prosecuting the attempt against Plevna, and has fallen back into the positions occupied before the commencement of the bombardment. The field artillery remain still in some of the positions of the bombardment. The intention is announced of a third renewal of the attempt in a fortnight with the arrival of the Guard. I have great doubts whether another attempt will be made on Plevna, and very much stronger doubts whether such an attempt, if made, can succeed.

The Turks are better soldiers individually than the Russians. Of that, after seeing not a few battles, I stand assured. The strategy of both, perhaps, is equally bad; but as regards both major and minor tactics the Turks are simply immeasurably superior. The Turks are better armed than the Russians, both in great and small arms. The Turks have engineers who can design admirable defensive positions. The Russian engineers seem incapable of repairing a hole in a bridge. The Turks seem as well provisioned as the Russians. The Turks are flushed with success. The Russians are depressed by failure after failure.

Nor is this all that impairs the Russian soldiers' dash, for that it is becoming impaired my reluctant personal observation of the war can testify. There is no braver man alive than the Russian soldier, but a brave soldier cannot continually face more than the fair chances of war. The Russian soldier is called on to face these, and dangers in addition which appeal with infinitely greater intensity of horror to his imagination. He knows that if he but receives a bullet in the ankle joint when he is in the front of an unsuccessful attack, the chances are even that he will die a death of torture, humiliation, and mutilation. No moral courage, no mental hardihood, can

stand against this horrible consciousness, and in the attack on the 11th I distinctly observed his reluctance to begin the storming part of the attack.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SECOND DEADLOCK IN BULGARIA

Tone of feeling at the Russian Head Quarters—The New Plan of Operations against Plevna—Kriloff's movement on the Turkish Line of Supply—General Kriloff's Failure—Entrance of Convoys into Plevna—An Expedition in the Black Sea—Renewed Fighting in the Shipka Pass—Great Attack by Sulaiman Pacha—Failure of the Turks and subsequent Panic in their Army—The Russian Army of the Lom—Retrograde Movement of the Czarévitch—Battle of Curkoi—Retreat and Dismissal of Mehemet Ali Pacha—A Reconnaissance of the Turkish Positions—The Military Situation in Bulgaria—Public Feeling at Constantinople

THE failure of the third attack on Plevna profoundly discouraged the Russian Army, from the Commander in Chief to the private, and lowered immensely the estimation in which the military power of the empire had previously been held in Europe. The Emperor, however, on this occasion showed the tenacity of his family. He ordered up very large reinforcements and prepared for a winter campaign. The following is a letter from the Russian Headquarters, written six days after the defeat —

† GORNY STUDEN, *September 19th* —I find the feeling here not so gloomy as I had expected. Military men acknowledge that they have been beaten, but as much by their own errors as by the bravery of the Turks, and there is not the slightest sign of hesitation, or weakening of the determination to fight it out. The idea of peace is not entertained. Everybody feels that it is a death struggle in which Turkey or Russia must go to the ground irretrievably, and the final issue is not doubted for an instant. Although the struggle must be hard, and may be long, Russia must ultimately crush her adversary, it is held, if only by mere brute force, in default of science, skill, and generalship.

Every preparation is being made for a winter campaign. A military railway from Fratesti to Simnitsa is to be

constructed, which will, it is hoped, be ready by the end of October, but I predict not before Christmas. Steam ice-boats have been ordered in view of the freezing of the Danube, with intent to keep the river open. A contract has been taken for warm clothing and housing for the troops during the winter campaign. Everything indicates the Russian determination to carry on the war to the end. Anybody knowing the feeling, not only of the Russian nation but of the army, knows that no other policy is possible; but the men on whom lies the responsibility for that mismanagement of the campaign which has so complicated the future may expect a stern reckoning. General Ignatieff is just now under a cloud. The generals who have muddled the war now complain that he did not give them to understand that the Turks would fight so hard, and misled them as to the number of men needed to make a successful invasion. As well might they say that they did not know the Turks were going to shoot with bullets. All the facts about the Turks were common property before the war; their war-strength, their bull-dog courage behind earthworks, their tenacity, their ferocity. Only one element was left out of the calculation—the profound incapacity of some of the Russian generals.

The Roumanians yesterday again attacked the redoubt from which a fire is so steadily maintained on the Grivica Redoubt. After displaying much gallantry they had to abandon the attempt. It is said that they will renew it, and there is certainly plenty of fight in Prince Charles's gallant young army, but in my opinion little chance of success unless they work up to the hostile redoubt by sap.

It was foreseen that a long time must elapse before the Russian Army would be in a position to renew its attack upon Osman Pacha with any chance of success. General Todleben, the engineer who, twenty-three years before, had defended Sebastopol with so much skill, was sent for, to advise upon the best means of effecting the reduction of Plevna. The following letters describe the state of affairs before Plevna towards the end of September:—

† SGALINCE (BEFORE PLEVNA), *September 23rd.*—The position of affairs has little changed here. The attack on Plevna has settled into a siege. Since the day when Skobelev was driven from the redoubts he had captured there has been no fighting

of serious consequence. The Roumanians, however, have persisted in making attempts against the second Grivica Redoubt. They are now steadily pushing forward by flying sap. The Russians mean to pursue the same tactics on their side as soon as they can get spades and shovels. The head-quarter staff have succeeded in understanding that these implements are occasionally useful in war, and have ordered a supply of them. If everything goes well, that supply may be expected in a month or six weeks, and then the siege may begin in earnest, provided the Roumanians, who have shovels, have not already taken the place. Regular approaches and the cutting off of the supplies are the means now adopted for the reduction of Plevna. This course was as open on the 1st of August as on the 1st of October.

General Kriloff, who now commands the cavalry, is in the rear of Plevna on the Sophia road for the purpose of cutting off the Turkish supplies. As the Turks have few cavalry, and that not good, General Kriloff should have it all his own way. The country is open, well adapted for cavalry movements, and an active leader with cavalry and horse artillery should make the passage of convoys difficult. As the Turks must have more than 60,000 men in the Plevna position, the question of supplies must be an urgent one with them, unless, as has been alleged, they have accumulated them for several months. This seems improbable, and the magazines surely must require replenishing. There has been no news from General Kriloff since he left, but distant cannon fire was heard to day coming from far behind Plevna, which would indicate that he is at work.

News has been received here that more Turkish forces are coming from Sophia. As they can only be Mustapha, not Nizams, it is hoped that Kriloff will meet and drive them back, though if there be really a possibility of starving out Plevna, it might be better to let these additional mouths to feed come in, and confine attention to the destruction of trains. Prince Charles remains at Porium, General Zotoff's headquarters are at Sgalince. The general staff is at Gorny Studen. News has just been received of Hifzi Pacha's arrival at Plevna with a small escort. It is supposed that he avoided Kriloff by taking the by ways. The approaching Turkish forces are at Lucovatz. General Kriloff is somewhere between that place and Teliche. Lascroff must have joined Kriloff ere now. I should have stated that Kriloff passed round the north of Plevna, starting from the Roumanian right. If Hifzi's arrival means that the Turks are taking the offensive, it will probably be against Loftcha.

NEW RUSSIA

† VERBICA, September 24th.—The Russian army is steadily against the second redoubt. They are now only eighty yards from the two redoubts being about equal in spirit and cheerful endurance. This redoubt taken, there is no doubt. Then two, or perhaps three, on the northern ridge, whose west position overhanging the River is pushing counter saps, and if the Russian resolution the redoubt should be taken. Great volumes of cannon smoke were seen yesterday, indicating fighting. General Zotoff had no news from Kriloff. I am now starting for Plevna, on the Sophia road.

† ETROPOL, NEAR SOPHIA ROAD, September 25th.—The Russian attempt to take Etropol has not been successful. In spite of our infantry and artillery we have here, the Russian are bringing two convoys through under our fire. A convoy of about 2,000 waggon loads of provisions, and a battery of artillery, and three companies of General Kriloff, who is in command, were sent until they had arrived at Tel Avad. He found them already in position and mounted in a battle which lasted all day, with no success on our course, to attack so large a force. That night he retired to the position at Dubnik, on the Sophia road, where the Turks advanced upon Dubnik. Another artillery fight ensued, but in the evening, however, two columns of the Russian Plevna, and taking Kriloff in the rear.

Dubnik, a thing which was manifestly impossible against infantry, especially at a point so near Plevna, where he could be attacked in the rear. A general in command of such detachments should have no definite instructions except to do as much harm as possible to the enemy, choosing his own time and place. Convoys should be attacked forty or fifty miles beyond Plevna and the attack kept up if necessary until under the very guns of the place. In a running fight of this kind, extending over forty or fifty miles, even with a convoy protected by infantry, the greater part of the carriages would be smashed by the artillery, the draught horses and oxen killed and the drivers frightened away. As the Turks have little cavalry, and that only of the very poorest kind, the Russian cavalry can range the whole district between Plevna, Widdin the Danube, and the Balkans with impunity, the country being so open that there is not the slightest danger of being cut off by infantry. General Kriloff is not a cavalry man at all, and he handles cavalry as if it were infantry, is afraid of being cut off, and thinks he must keep his communications open, forgetting that cavalry in such an open country as this can only be cut off by cavalry, of which the Turks have none worth speaking of. The Bashi Bazouks and Circassians never attempt to make a stand even against one-fourth of their numbers. General Kriloff, instead of retiring upon Tristenik to keep his communications open, should on the contrary, have cut loose from the Roumanian right wing, and advanced on the Sophia road to the Balkans with half his forces to meet the next convoy, while the other half might have moved in the direction of Widdin to meet supplies coming from there. In this way only can cavalry be made useful here.

Upon retiring, Kriloff left two regiments of Cossacks at Etropol to watch the Sophia road, and another convoy slipped through the fingers of this detachment yesterday. Etropol is too far from the Sophia road, in the first place. Then they did not place outposts sufficiently advanced to give warning in time. This convoy, besides, did not come along the Sophia road, but on another alongside it, which we have only lately discovered. By the time we received information of its coming and had reached the scene of action, the convoy was almost under the guns of a protected bridge on the Sophia road over the river Vid.

Had we charged even then we might have captured the greater part of the convoy, as it was only protected by cavalry that ran away. We waited several minutes for the artillery to come up, and then the officer in charge lost about fifteen

minutes in writing a report to General Kriloff, to say that he meant to attack. By this time the convoy for the most part had got safely over the Vid, either by the bridge or by a ford, so that the report was superfluous. We threw a few shells at them, to which the guns protecting the bridge instantly answered. Then, as it was quite dark, we retired to Etropol, our whole spoil being a pair of oxen. Evidently things must be managed better than this if the Turkish supplies are to be cut off.

† *THEIRIA.* *Sept. 26th.* -- Upon returning here this morning we found General Kriloff gone with his whole detachment to Kreza, over the Iker. It seems that a reconnaissance he sent to Mahul-ta yesterday reported that there is a Turkish officer, high in rank, at Kreza, organizing a force of cavalry from the Circassian villages in the neighbourhood, and likewise obtaining recruits for the infantry. Kriloff has gone off there in hopes of taking the officer prisoner and stopping the recruiting business. The whole force at his command is hardly necessary for this, and this is not the way to prevent the arrival of supplies along the Sophia road. It is raining fearfully, and the population of several abandoned villages is camped around Tristenik in the mud, presenting a sad spectacle.

† *VERBICA. ROUMANIAN HEADQUARTERS. September 26th, evening.* -- The Roumanians are pushing forward their works against the second redoubt with a perseverance and a pluck worthy all praise, and which is the more remarkable as the Russians are doing absolutely nothing on their side. The rain is continuous, the mud in the trenches is fearful, and it is very cold besides, but officers and men alike stick to their posts in spite of this with a pluck and resolution which excites my admiration. They evidently mean to take the second redoubt, or have a desperate try at it. They are now within sixty yards with their third parallel, and they are just beginning the fourth parallel, which they mean to push within thirty yards of the redoubt before giving assault. At this short distance the terrible Turkish fire is reduced to a minimum, as the Turks will not be able to fire more than two rounds before they come to the bayonet. The Roumanian soldiers seem to be stout fellows, and I think they are sure to get this redoubt. Were the Russians advancing as rapidly on their side Plevna would fall before two weeks. But from all I can make out the Russians are completely at sea. They seem to have no plan, no idea, no head, and not to know what to do next.

They are waiting for reinforcements, which are arriving slowly, and which, when they are all here, will hardly more than cover the losses by battle and by sickness during the last two months. I think history offers no such example of a splendid army in such an utterly helpless condition. The

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possibility that they have mined the redoubt, and mean to blow it up when driven out

Their defeat before Plevna had not relaxed the firmness with which the Russians held the Shipka Pass, by which they hoped one day to re enter Roumelia. The two next following letters are from the Turkish side, the first relating to a most determined attack made by Suleiman Pacha on the 17th of September —

Q SHIPKA PASS, *September 19th* — The attempt to carry the formidable Russian positions in the Shipka Pass has for the moment proved unsuccessful. Fort St Nicholas, the high rock frowning upon the mouth of the pass, which to the Czar and Sultan is of equal importance, had an exceedingly narrow escape of changing owners on the 17th instant. At one time, indeed, soon after the attack commenced, which was shortly before day break ("the darkest hour before the dawn" being well chosen as best for all night attacks), it was fully believed that it had fallen. Had the attacking force been supported by the efforts of those upon whom devolved the duty of co operation, all might have been well with the Turks, and the standard of the Prophet have again assumed its place on the entire range of forts, at present forming so insuperable an obstacle to the capture of the now celebrated pass.

Suleiman Pacha has waited until he has succeeded in forming as handy an army as any of his brother generals can boast of, and, from all that can be gathered, it is no fault of his that he is not at this moment crowned with the success which the plan he had formed appears fully to warrant. The causes have not yet been fully ascertained, but there can be no doubt it was in no way his intention to dream of capturing the Russian positions by a direct attack upon the principal one of them. A threatening demonstration on some or one of the chain of forts in the rear of Fort St Nicholas and

parallel with the main road through the pass, might stand a very fair chance of success, and this would appear to have been intended on the present occasion.

The troops told off to commence the attack (nearly 3,000 in number) did their duty admirably, and succeeded in obtaining a firm foothold upon the rocky fort, a considerable portion of which soon fell into their possession. Exposed for hour after hour to a galling fire on their front and on both flanks, it is marvellous how they stood their ground so long, seeing, even with their then advantage in point of numbers over the enemy in their immediate front, that they could not, unless a diversion were made in their behalf, hope to maintain their ground, even if the entire fort fell into their possession. Upon whose shoulders the blame rests (and certainly Suleiman himself ought to be freed from it) is not an easy matter to ascertain. The only reason which can be assigned for the failure is that the points chosen by the right and left attack were found to be too strong; still, to capture them was one matter, but to make an important auxiliary movement is a far easier one.

Very feeble flank attempts were made by the generals to whom the duty was assigned, and scarcely credible accounts have been bruited about of the inefficiency, and even absence altogether from the fight, of the officers with these troops. The action lasted until nearly mid-day, when the unsupported troops in the centre, having no hope of co-operation from east or west, and having actually seen a large body of the enemy rapidly coming up to attack them, were very properly ordered to retire. Disappointed and galled as they were, it was not to be wondered at that they fled in disorder down the side of the steep rock, which it had cost them so much to gain; and great is Suleiman Pacha's good fortune that the fear occasioned by their flight did not communicate itself to the rest of his army. A useless sacrifice of life and limb is alone the result of the day's work; about 1,000 were killed, wounded, and missing, and there is scant hope of the Turks finding the latter taken prisoners, the bayonet having been actively employed during the retreat.

We shall doubtless not have to wait long before the next attack is made, as the weather in the Balkan range will soon be breaking. When that movement is commenced, it will, at the least, be with the knowledge of why the present attack failed; and costly as has been the acquirement of that knowledge, it may in the end save disasters still greater.

С SHIPKA PASS, *September 22nd.*—After a defeat, the next

thing naturally to be expected is a panic among the troops to whom the fortune of war has been unfavourable. Such was the case on the night of Tuesday last, when from some unknown cause—possibly owing to the howling of the wind, which had risen high as the sun went down and predisposed the nerves of the picquets to believe every crackling branch a Russian footstep—the alarm was given, and the greatest excitement prevailed amongst the horde of irregulars who form the rear in advance and the van in retreat of Suleiman Pacha's numerous army. They cared not to wait until the cause could be ascertained—the fact of the alarm being given was enough, and the Russians might be on their heels. At every step as they rushed pell mell down (generally laden with the booty they had succeeded in plundering on the march), they added to the confusion, especially amongst the swarms of camp followers, and the great numbers of Bulgarian peasants who are enforcedly employed in the transport service.

It was not for more than an hour after the panic had arisen that any signs of its being allayed could be observed, though the admirable conduct of the regular troops in calmly taking up their assigned positions should have put to the blush even such poltroons as those who had been the first to fly. A little

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shots would herald the Russian advance. He did not, however give himself the time for thinking, but joined his comrades in the rush to the rear, till he discovered himself to be alone and without a following, even of the class who are to be found with all armies in the field.

Something ought to be done to efface both Monday's misfortune and Tuesday's disgrace, or the morale of a large portion of this army will be seriously deteriorated. Upwards of a month has elapsed since Suleiman Pacha occupied the heights which have given him such a powerful advantage over the Russians, who are cooped up in the rock and the earthworks behind which lie across the pass, and yet nothing has been effected towards the capture of what has now become a veritable stronghold. His telegrams have announced the closing of every inlet of the besieged with the exception of the main road from GABROVA, and why this is not attempted to be blocked whilst a sufficient portion of the army keeps the garrison at bay, is by no means apparent. Suleiman's next step is looked for with the liveliest interest, as upon it depends the continuance of that confidence which his good name has hitherto inspired, and a change of generals

is not always attended with advantage in an army situated as is that of the Balkans.

Ten thousand men is a very moderate estimate of the number placed *hors de combat* since the 20th August saw the Russians retiring to their rocky fortress before the onward march of the hitherto victorious Turks, and what is the result beyond the infliction of perhaps a similar loss on their enemy, who has had time to display his skill, and has effectively done so, in marvellously strengthening his previously weak defences? The fighting going on as I write in the main army near Bjela cannot fail to have its effect here, and a victory on the north may in an instant do for Suleiman what a month has not enabled him to effect.

The sweeping condemnation at Philippopolis of between three and four hundred unfortunate Bulgarian insurgents—taken with arms and without—may strike terror to the hearts of those of the Sultan's subjects of that nationality who remain faithful or are wavering in their allegiance, but it certainly strikes one as a ruthless display of what may be expected if the Crescent again shines over this unhappy land. The failure to take the Pass on the 17th was the more annoying as Suleiman Pacha, anticipating the issue of the struggle, had telegraphed to the Seraskier that he had captured Fort St. Nicholas, and the good news had been transmitted by the Porte to all its Ambassadors at Foreign Courts.

The duties which had been assigned by the force of circumstances to the army under the Czarewitch, designated at its formation the Army of Rustchuk, had from the first, as we have seen, a defensive character. This force had to guard a line extending from the Danube to the foot of the Balkans, and prevent the interference of the Turkish Army of Shumla with the Russian line of communication with Tirnova, or with the operations about Plevna. The line was moved backwards and forwards from time to time, but it was never broken through. Early in September, the Czarewitch had taken up a position between the Kara Lom and the Ak Lom, which rendered it possible for the Turks to make a turning movement, as his line extended from Elena through Djulin to Cairkoi, leaving the country between Cairkoi and the Kara Lom open to the enemy. It was therefore decided to fall back, and, instead of Schahofskoy advancing to join the Czarewitch, the latter relied upon his own forces. At this time the Turks were

preparing for a forward movement, and when the Czarewitch fell back, the Turks followed up, engaging his rearguard at Karahassankoi, Popkoi, Opaka, and Kaceljevo. These affairs were all treated as great victories by the Turkish reports, but they were regarded in the Russian camp as of comparatively small importance, so far as their strategic results were concerned. Many losses were sustained on both sides, with no compensating result. The Porte, however, considered that Mehemet Ali ought to be able to do more than he had done, and under its pressing orders he fought the Battle of Curkoi, on September 21st, and having failed, retreated on the 24th. This failure cost him his command. To an English Correspondent at Varna he said, "he had been dismissed because he had refused to break his neck against a stone wall." He has since stated that he had only 40,000 men at his disposal.

† HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY OF THE CZAREWITCH, DOLNY MONASTIR, *October 1st*—A whole week has passed since the unsuccessful attack of the Turks on the Russian positions at Cairkoi, and they have made no other offensive movements. It has long been apparent to me, as I have frequently hinted in previous despatches, that the army of Mehemet Ali is comparatively small. It has shown itself only at one point at a time, and although occasionally ostentatiously displaying tents on hill tops, and executing manœuvres in pl'uns in sight of the Russian positions, it has nevertheless failed to give me any impression of large numbers. At headquarters it is believed to consist of 40,000 men, but this number is certainly exaggerated.

Within the past two or three days the enemy has renewed the tactics he has diligently practised since the withdrawal of the army of the Czarewitch from the Banicka Lom, and, after having made vigorous but unsuccessful attempts to turn the left of the 11th Corps at Cairkoi, he has disappeared quickly from the positions he held one week ago. According to the reports of our scouts, he has re-crossed the Lom, and is now concentrated near Kaceljevo. The Russian outposts are now at Polomarca, Opaka, Ablava, Ostrica, and Strobko, all along the west bank of the Lom, occupying very nearly the same positions as they held before the retrograde movement.

It will be remembered that the army of the Czarewitch withdrew after three battles along the line, in each of which the Turkish losses were very great, and the Russian comparatively

little, because our troops had the advantage of holding good defensive positions in cover, and only attacked the Turks in order to follow up a repulse. At the Battle of Cairkoi the Turkish loss was over three thousand, increasing the sum total of dead and wounded since the attack on our line a month ago to between nine and ten thousand men. This loss is evidently too great for the resources of Mehemet Ali, and he has found himself obliged to evacuate the territory he had gained with so much difficulty, for the same reason that the Russians withdrew,—namely, a lack of corps to hold the entire line.

We now have before us the rather serious spectacle of two armies occupying a line sixty miles long, which neither has force enough to hold against an advance of the other. The all-important rôle of the army of the Czarewitch has been to cover the line of communications to the Balkans, and to keep the Danube from Sistova downwards. Events have proved that the advance beyond the Jantra was useless, since it was delayed until the Turks recovered from the panic which the crossing of the Danube caused among them. By assuming the offensive the Russians have gained nothing whatever. The positions along the Bjela-Rustchuk chaussée (high road) are strongly fortified, and Bjela itself may be said to be impregnable. It will be understood that the Jantra is far in the rear of the actual positions held by the army of the Czarewitch, for his advance posts are from fifteen to twenty miles to the eastward of the river, and his corps are concentrated at about two-thirds that distance toward Rustchuk and Rasgrad.

In the upper valley of the Lom no advance has yet been made. The weather continues clear and cool. Snow lies on the summits of the Balkans. The roads are hard and dry again, and the effects of the recent severe attack have vanished.

+ KARA VERDOVKA, *October 4th.*—The sudden and unexpected withdrawal of Turkish forces across the river Lom, which began on Sunday, opposite the right wing of the 13th Corps and the left of the 11th, is as inexplicable as it is complete and positive. The tactics of Mehemet Ali, since his brisk and successful aggressive movement a month since, have been to keep in sight at some point of his line a sufficient force to make it seem evident that an attack was meditated, and, by quickly moving this force from one side to the other of the semicircle occupied, he has kept the attention of the Russians alive along the whole line. There is no question of the truth of the statement, made in my last despatch, that both armies,

I have just returned to Kara Verbovka from a reconnaissance made to discover the whereabouts of the enemy. This is a village situated on the Lom, nearly opposite Kaceljevo, which occupies a narrow little valley half a mile east of the river. For two days this has been neutral ground, and small bands of Turkish marauders have been scouring the valley for meagre plunder. With a small force of cavalry under the command of Prince Mamonoff and Baron Kaulbars, we left the village, where we had assembled under cover of a dense mist, and descended into the green valley of the Lom. A cold rain, which had drenched us all night, continued at intervals as we began our march, and the fog gradually disappeared as we descended the slope, disclosing the whole landscape, the hillsides across the valley, and the dotted rows of straw huts which the Turks build wherever they pass a day. Not a living thing was visible in the valley, not a sign was there of an occupied camp. A regiment of hussars was sent along the road to Opaka and Polomarca, while Cossacks and lancers took possession of the village of Kaceljevo and surrounding heights. Two Bashi-Bazouks were captured, who reported that the enemy were 35,000 strong in the immediate vicinity of Kaceljevo. Therefore we proceeded with some caution. Arriving at the summit of a hill to the east of the village, we found strong batteries, freshly made; an outpost camp just deserted, with garments and utensils left behind in hasty flight; and still farther on a large deserted camp, with artillery hidden in the bushes.

Two miles beyond the village we came out on an open field, and there lay before us a panorama of the whole Turkish encampment miles away, extending along the farther side of the valley on the east branch of the Lom, around Solenik and Kostankza, in front of Pizanca, Turlak and Esirdje. We could count seven distinct camps, with great droves of cattle feeding on the adjacent hillsides, and far away on the horizon two or three isolated rows of large square tents. There seemed to be very little artillery, but considerable regular cavalry, and a force perhaps of 15,000 infantry, who were mostly Egyptians. From the hill, and just across a valley dividing us from the Turkish camp, could be seen, lying flat in the furze, a strong detachment of infantry ready to welcome us. A few Cossacks dashed down into the valley and exchanged some shots with the outposts. The cattle were hurriedly driven away as the lances of our three squadrons bristled on the hill-top, and there was a stir of preparation visible in the camps, but we only looked on until dusk, and then retired. Meantime, the hussars on our

right had found a small camp, and charged down upon it, capturing a number of horses and cattle, and killing a score of Bashu Bazouks and Circassians. They report the enemy strong at Karahassankoi and Sadina. The result of the reconnaissance is to prove that the whole Turkish force, retired along the line of railway between Rasgrad and Rustchuk, is strongly concentrated at several points, especially near Kadikoi and has now re-occupied almost the same line as that held before the advance of a month ago.

The cold storm continues, and the roads are impassable for artillery. If there be an engagement of importance it must take place in the immediate vicinity of Rustchuk, but I doubt if the Turkish army will attack for some time, as it has evidently chosen strongly defensive positions with the intention of discontinuing its attempts to break through the Czarewitch's forces.

+ HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY OF THE CZAREWITCH, DOLNY MONASTIR, *October 3rd* — We are still playing at the old game of hide and seek on a large scale, and the oft repeated story of the sudden disappearance of the Turks is again told at headquarters, and commented on with more gravity than it is possible for any one to command who appreciates the ludicrous side of the situation. Imagine two large armies, forty or fifty thousand strong, losing each other every day or two! It is a farce which if it were not serious, would be in the highest degree ridiculous. A long irregular line from the Danube to Tirnova is held by opposing forces, neither of which thinks itself strong enough to make a serious attempt to break the line of the other, but both manœuvre about on the hills, wearying the soldiers in rapid marches and wasting them in small engagements which result in considerable loss of life, but in no advantage to either side. I doubt if there has ever been such a grand farce enacted since the invention of gun powder.

Even the advance of the army of Mehemet Ali a month ago I have ceased to regard as a serious attempt to break the line of the Czarewitch's army. Beginning at Karahassankoi, where General Leonoff on the left and centre of the position, and Baron Kaulbars at Hadarkoi on the right, made a most gallant resistance, which was rivalled by the defence of Ablava and Kadikoi a few days later, the advance was unchecked by the

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Pavlo, only a few hours from Gorný Studen. What is more,

it is evident to every one who knows the positions that at any time within two or three weeks after the attack on Karahassankoi it was an easy matter to break the line at almost any point. Mehemet Ali did not follow up his advantages; he sauntered across to the Banicka Lom, saw plainly the Russian organization very much broken up, and knew that the force was very much weakened by the drafts from Plevna; nevertheless, he paused lazily in the sunny grain fields along the plateau east of the Banicka Lom, and let his enemy recover and pull himself together again, and stand on the defensive concentrated in a little half circle scarcely ten miles across.

One must come to one of two conclusions—either there was very bad generalship on the Turkish side, which the well-directed attack partly disproves, or the advance was only a demonstration on a large scale. For my own part, I am much inclined to cling to the latter opinion, considering the facilities the Turks have for knowing the numbers and dispositions of the Russian forces, and the superiority of tactics of the Turkish generals, proved by their skilful manœuvring in the face of the enemy. Of the generalship on the Russian side it is unnecessary to speak, for it is a matter of universal comment and criticism, and I need only refer to the descriptions of the different movements which I have sent from time to time by telegraph, and let every one judge for himself.

Here on the field it is with the brave, patient private soldier that one must sympathize the most. Armed with a rifle which has a range a third shorter than the Turkish weapon, he is obliged to stand fire for a long time before he can return a shot. Ordered to march squarely into a rain of bullets without any cover, he never for a moment hesitates longer than to cross himself, but is off cheerfully, and enthusiastically convinced that he is serving God and his country when he is fighting the Turk. Wounded, he still goes on until he falls, and then never loses his pluck even to the last. What a pitiable sight it is to see the long trains of ox-carts of the rudest description, their octagonal wheels grinding, screeching, and jolting over the rough roads a mile and a half an hour, every one with two or three wounded men whose groans almost drown the squeaking of the axles. A soldier is wounded at the front. Possibly he gets attention from the courageous attendants of the Red Cross under fire, and then is carried by his comrades miles to the rear and is put into one of these torture carts, to be pounded and jolted for three days until he reaches a hospital.

While I relate the experience of almost every soldier wounded

at a distance from the main hospitals, I do not intend to imply that as far as it goes the ambulance service is defective, the trouble is that it doesn't begin to go half far enough, but is on the same cumbersome scale as the supply trains, with far too little force to properly attend to the wounded which come to the rear after any large battle, and a certain ease and deliberation of movement which is agonizing to one accustomed to see the duties of the ambulance corps attended to with enthusiastic promptitude.

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I must say that I have seen more to horrify me in the treatment of the wounded here than ever before, and in every case there was a good reason for the neglect. But no one will pardon a neglect which is the result of lack of hospital supplies on a field where all other supplies are over abundant.

One thing the private soldier certainly has, and that is food, and plenty of it, and of excellent quality, but the clothing is scanty for this cold season that has so suddenly come upon us. In the summer the soldiers wore their coarse white shirts as blouses and carried their coats in their knapsacks. Now the sacks are light, and everything is put on to resist the cold. The thin linen shelter-tents are only an apology for sleeping under the sky, wind and rain penetrate everywhere, boots torn and thin after months of almost constant marching become soiled.

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nized prerogative of the officer, but soldiers patiently and takes it as he takes the fire of the Turks, as he toiled along the dusty tracks in the intense heat of summer—always without a word. Supplies of clothing are already on the way here the bootmakers are busy on all sides making up the leather which arrived a few days ago, and before winter fairly sets in every one will be comfortably clothed.

Side by side with the men in the ranks, sharing with them all their hardships, having scarcely greater comforts and luxuries, are the officers of the line, most of them intelligent and even cultivated men who have all the merits of the private soldier. They are the strong buttresses of the army, and deserve every sympathy and encouragement. Often, very often, I have seen a detachment left in a position by

itself with only the officers of the line to direct its movements. On one occasion a squadron of cavalry held the wing of a position. It was fiercely attacked by an overwhelming force of infantry. Without a word from the staff, the line officers took charge of the whole left wing and saved the day. Compare the life of the gallant colonels and brigadiers who sleep night after night at the forepost, personally superintending every detail of placing the vedettes and protecting the front, with the existence of the generals, so far away that they learn of a battle after it has been lost, drinking champagne to the sound of music,—and the sympathies must go with those who do the work. Perhaps in this descending scale of merit in the Russian Army is to be found the reason why the front of the line is not better protected, why the Turks get lost to us now and then, and why a severe fight results only in loss of life and not in any change of position.

The long line of the Czarewitch's army has been exposed to attack constantly for months. From the headquarters, whenever a battle occurs, a member of the staff is sent away post haste to advise and assist the general in command at the point in question, and the position is considered safe, I suppose, because this combination of practical and theoretical knowledge must necessarily cover all possible turns and crooks of military science. It is true that such a line has been difficult to keep with a force so limited. It has been about fifty miles long, with scarcely as many thousand men to hold it; but notwithstanding unaccountable movements and wild manœuvres the line has been kept to the present time, and half of the original plan of the Russians has succeeded. Of course this plan was to make two walls of men from the river to the Balkans, in order to permit the safe passage of troops towards Adrianople. Both armies on the flanks were to be strictly defensive ones, and the active force was to be over the Balkans.

The *naïveté* of this plan of campaign is apparent, and Plevna has proved how much easier it was to draw the lines of these walls on the map than to build them and keep them unbroken. No one could imagine the fierceness of the fire from the breech-loading rifles, which is far hotter than any ever before experienced by soldiers. From a thin skirmish line of Turks comes a pelting of bullets that in muzzle-loading times a regimental line in close order could never equal. A successful charge is a physical impossibility. To look ahead a little, I venture to say that no one in the Russian Army can think of the winter campaign with complacency. Forage is already short. After a day's rain the roads are ankle-deep with mud,

From this *chaussée* one can overlook the whole country, and the Russian camps are all visible, nestled in the grain fields near the villages.

East of the Lom the country is quite similar in character, but more broken by small valleys, and near Rasgrad is much wooded. Between the Lom and Banicka Lom is a plateau of irregular horseshoe form, full of villages, interrupted by frequent deep valleys; but in general terms a high plateau. This was entirely occupied by the Turks in their recent advance, but they penetrated among the hills farther west at only one or two points, and confined their demonstrations to the positions along this line. The small ridges with the patches of woodland formed a succession of screens, behind which it was easy to manœuvre large forces without their being seen by the enemy, and the network of roads, more or less good, made concentration at different points an easy matter. There were the two armies facing one another across a valley perhaps half a mile wide; the foreposts kept up an almost constant guerilla fight; several attacks were made of more or less importance; and then suddenly nothing remained on the hill-tops but empty straw huts and bush shelters; and the Cossacks leisurely wandered off to find where the Turks were gone.

But for the fact that the Circassians are about as dangerous to the Turks as they are to the Russians, they would be excellent soldiers, for they protect the front quite perfectly. As it is they are quite as likely to shoot the Turkish officers for the sake of booty as they are the Cossacks. An officer who came to Popskoi with a flag of truce begged for a large sheet to display when he returned to the lines, and had a Cossack sent on in advance to announce his arrival, for he was in great fear of his own foreposts, declaring they were quite sure to shoot him if he did not take great precautions.

When on Tuesday last the right wing of the Rustchuk army was seen marching along the hills across the Lom, to the music of drum and bands, with colours flying and arms flashing in the sunlight, it seemed very much like bravado, and was a fitting flourish at the end of an aggressive campaign of a month without a result. Word came in that there was no one in the valley of the Lom, so a reconnaissance was planned, and the order was given for three regiments of cavalry to assemble in the little village Kara Verbovka, on the west bank of the river, on Wednesday evening. I was invited to accompany the expedition, which was commanded by Prince Manueloff and Baron Kaulbars. The result of the reconnaissance I have announced by telegram, but the details of the expedition

and of the trip across the river to send the despatch to Bucharest, are worth mentioning

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away—a few Cossacks, two officers, myself and servant—towards the village, passing the Russian positions along the Banicka Lom at about nine o'clock. We had a couple of Bulgars for guides who, although born and brought up in the neighbourhood, knew nothing of the country, and lost us entirely before we reached the top of the hills across the river. On we went, always ascending, and it began to rain drearily long before we got to the summit of the range. At last we ran across a deserted Turkish battery with plenty of wood lying about, built a fire, lay down in the ditch and slept an hour, and woke up to find that the rain had extinguished the fire. We knew that the Turks always build huts wherever they camp, so we searched in the darkness until we found some bush shelters, crawled under them, and slept until day-break, completely drenched by the cold rain, which flooded the ground and entered the hut in a dozen streams.

A dense fog covered the earth, hiding the landscape completely, and after building a fire with straw dried with the heat of our bodies and warming ourselves thoroughly, we started away through the mist and rain to find the village, and at last came to the rendezvous just before the regiments assembled there. When we came into the village there was not a living thing in sight, the fog canopy made the silence most oppressive, and we listened in vain for a sound. A most mournful sight was this village, full of pretty little Turkish cottages half hidden among the trees.

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stranger. There had been plenty of marauders about, so we searched the village thoroughly, and the Cossacks found a couple of Bashi-Bazouks hidden away in the fields near by. Both had Peabody-Martini rifles, were tall, square-shouldered fellows, well dressed in the ordinary Turkish peasant's costume, and carried a great quantity of ammunition. The thought naturally occurred to me that they would be immediately shot, but they were treated with marked gentleness,

to the rear. I was told

of the responsibility of

blood, yet I believe that

no other people in the world would have let these fellows off, for they were simply murderers caught with their arms in

their hands. In all probability they will be set free, as they don't wear any uniform, and will find their way back to the Turkish lines again. It is said that a great many have done this, and I cannot doubt it.

When the fog lifted we filed down the gentle slope into the valley of the Lom, and crossed the river by a ford, then quickly up the hill to the village of Kaceljevo, near at hand, which was quite as lifeless as the one we had just left. Here the Cossacks, who are supposed to know the way always, took the wrong path and delayed the advance an hour or more, for they were to go forward in the centre, the Lancers on the left and the Hussars on the right. At last we climbed the great hill back of the town, and had the whole country for miles around under us like a map. To the south was the great mountain near Karahassankoi, and beyond, a glimpse of distant Popskoi in the intervale; east in the horizon was the ridge where the railway runs; north, the hills about Rutschuk; and west, the valley of the Lom, and the summits far beyond. Cruising about in the low oak-trees on the hill-top we came suddenly upon a deserted battery, and a camp near by, evidently just left, for, notwithstanding the recent rain, dry clothing was lying about, and quantities of utensils were strewn along the road. Equipments left behind showed that regular cavalry had occupied the post, and scattered clothing of Bulgar women proved that the marauders had made this their headquarters as well. The Bashi-Bazouks had told us that the hills about Solenik were covered with camps, so we were not surprised to see from the east side of the summit white tents all along across the valley of the Beli Lom.

We approached until we could see the uniforms of the soldiers in the camps, and the only unusual movement there was when the Cossacks came out in full sight, and then we saw the Turks driving away over the hills the great herds of cattle which were feeding on the slopes. There were but few soldiers in the camps, but a cautious advance to the edge of the hill overlooking Solenik showed the infantry lying in the edge of the furze to receive us. Of course we could not attack. The Cossacks went down and had a brush with the Circassians in the edge of the valley, and when darkness came on we retired and met the Hussars, who had been successful in breaking up a camp they had found, killing twenty-five Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians, and not losing a man.

In the rain and darkness we found our way near midnight to the positions again; having made an advance in the twenty-four hours of only about twenty-five miles from headquarters. When we came near the spot where we left our luggage the

day before, we two separated from the force and went to the camp, expecting to find some one to welcome us. Not a tent, not a soldier was there, all had disappeared during the day, having been ordered off to some position we were unable to discover. It was midnight, we had neither eaten nor drunk since the evening of the day before, for no one carried rations on the expedition on account of the heavy roads and the necessity of going light weight. There was nothing to do but to stable the horses in a ruined house and turn in there ourselves and sleep. The next day, before taking the despatch and letters I was about to send to Bucharest, we made an effort of a few hours to find the spot where we had left our luggage, but after having fasted forty two hours I gave up the search and rode for Batin arriving towards dark. Leaving our horses in the village, we had a mile and a half to walk to the Danube and landed at last on the island a mile above the new bridge an hour after sunset. We knew there was a path across the island where the bridge is being built, so we fought our way through the tangled undergrowth in the rain and darkness until we reached the muddy track and followed it northwards until it came plump into the Danube on the other side. Not a boat was to be found, not a soldier was within hail. At last we found some Bulgars, who guided us to a camp of marines, who kindly set us over the stream, and we were landed in the marshes three or four miles from the solid land, where the lights of Petrosani twinkled in the distance.

A brisk cold wind drove across the marsh, and the rain ceased for a time, but it was as dark as a pocket. On we trudged, scarcely able to walk after our excursion stumbling about over the track, at times knee deep in the muddy water, and after great difficulty reached the lagoon which separates the marsh from the high land. To find the ' ' we only solved after a half-hour other side of the bridge was a ' ' who was with difficulty persuaded to let us pass. At two in the morning we were sound asleep on the floor of a dirty little Greek restaurant with Russians, Greeks, Moldavians, and Bulgars singing choruses over the cheap wine, and filling the room with vile smoke.

I have given a meagre description of a trip in Bulgaria in bad weather to show what the difficulties are, and how it is quite out of the power of any one to make even a short journey except at great personal discomfort, and with no little fatigue. It seems as if our picnic days are over now. Sleeping in a tent in the hot weather was rather to be avoided, but now

even this miserable shelter is welcome. Bulgar houses, which we shunned as we would the pest, on account of the myriads of insects that swarm within the walls, we now look upon as a luxurious refuge from the damp, chill atmosphere. To give a brief resumé of the new positions: The Russians are now concentrated nearer the Danube than before, opposite the strong force of Turks at Kadikoi, a village about ten miles from Rustchuk. The line still lies along the Banicka Lom, but cavalry occupies the whole territory west of the Lom. The positions of the Russian right are about fifteen miles from those of the Turkish left, along the railway near Rasgrad, while the 12th Corps and part of the 13th are in the immediate neighbourhood of the Lom, near Rustchuk. The 11th Corps has not greatly changed its positions during the past two weeks.

In the following letter, a Correspondent who had followed the campaign from its commencement reviews the errors and failures of the Russian generals.

† BUCHAREST, *Oct. 15th*.—The rain has been pouring down for a week—steadily, persistently, obstinately, with scarcely a respite; the sun has not looked out once; the sky is a dark grey spongy blanket, hung low down over our heads, which is dripping, running over, and discharging itself in bucketfuls. The weather god has positively taken sides with the Turks, and having delayed the opening of the campaign for more than a month, now seems determined to bring it to a close a month or six weeks earlier than was to be expected. For should this weather continue the campaign is at an end, and nothing can be done but wait for the ground to freeze and a fall of snow, when possibly a winter campaign may be attempted. There is still hope that this may not be the case, that the rain may cease, and that we may yet have a month, and perhaps even six weeks, during which something may be done. Everything therefore depends upon the weather, and the prospect is not encouraging. The results of the campaign so far, may be summed up as follows:—The Russians have crossed the Danube, they have taken the fortress of Nicopolis, and they have lost 50,000 men in killed and wounded.

For a campaign undertaken with such high hopes, with everything requisite to bring it to a victorious conclusion except military talent—begun with two most important operations brilliantly and successfully carried out, this is a result as unexpected as it is discouraging. For be it remembered that the only real conquests of the campaign, the passage of the

Danube and the capture of Nicopolis, were made with a loss of less than three thousand, and we have absolutely nothing to show in exchange for the rest of this immense loss of 47,000 men. Had the Russians sat quietly down after the capture of Nicopolis and not moved a foot, or had they gone to sleep and slept all summer, they would have been in exactly the same position they are in to day, and they would have been 47,000 men richer, that is, nearly one third of the force with which they first crossed the Danube at Sistova. One third of the army lost and nothing to show for it but three defeats—such is the result of General Levitsky's military science—Levitsky, the Moltke of Russia.

There is another point worth noting in reference to this campaign, which is that the two great Russian successes, the passage of the Danube and the passage of the Balkans, were accomplished by a lucky chance, in which good luck and Turkish incapacity counted for a good deal more than Russian skill and generalship. At Sistova, as General Dragomiroff very truly remarked, the Turks were asleep, at Shipka they were unprepared. If we look, on the other hand, at the successes of the Turks, we see that they have been accomplished, first, by a splendid stroke of strategy, second by the most desperate valour, third, by consummate skill in engineering. The Russian successes were the result of chance and unforeseen circumstances, the Turkish victories, on the contrary, were won by downright good generalship, military skill, and science—elements which may be calculated, estimated, and counted upon in the future.

These are the facts, let Generals Levitsky and Nepokoitchitsky digest them as they may. Their excuse is, I believe, that they had not enough troops, and that they did not know the Turks were so strong. The excuse is a very feeble one. In the first place, the Russian mobilisation began and the Russian staff was formed last November, five months before the declaration of war, seven months before the fighting actually began. Where were their spies during all this time, and why did they not have correct information with regard to the force, armaments, organization, and numbers of the Turks? And if they had not enough troops there were plenty more, and the Emperor was ready to give them had they been asked for. Again, why did they not know of the march of Osman Pacha from Widdin to Plevna? There was a month during which Osman Pacha was marching upon Plevna, and Generals Levitsky and Nepokoitchitsky never knew it and never found it out. Why did they not know, and why did they not find it out? And having given such

proofs of incapacity as these, why do they not, if they have any patriotism left, resign and go home? These are questions which not only the Russian people but the Russian army is asking, without receiving any satisfactory answer.

It is true that the Russians began the war with an insufficient number of troops—that is, with an insufficient number to take Constantinople, or even to reach the capital, and I am willing to admit that it is doubtful whether they had enough to take Adrianople, though I am convinced they had enough in the beginning to have crossed the Balkans and occupied the country to the very gates of that place. But from saying they have not enough troops to take Constantinople to the assertion that they have not enough to take Plevna there is an immense difference. It is a difference the importance of which the headquarter staff have probably not even perceived. It simply means this—that they began a war with the avowed intention of capturing Constantinople with a force which they find, after having been increased by half, is still too weak to capture an unfortified village twenty miles from the Danube. For although Plevna is fortified now, it was not fortified when the march on Constantinople was begun.

Such a mistake, such a miscalculation, avowed and acknowledged, and even offered as an excuse, is a confession of imbecility beyond what even could have been expected. The Russians had across the Danube at the time of the last attack upon Plevna, including the Roumanians, about 200,000 men. If this force is not capable of taking Plevna, what force, it may be asked, will be required over the Danube before a sufficient number of troops can be sent against Plevna to ensure its capture? What force will be required to cross the Balkans? How many more troops must we have to take Adrianople? And, above all, what force will be required to reach Constantinople? Evidently, at this rate we shall soon be into the millions; and if the Emperor means to prosecute the war with the present headquarter staff, he had better call out two million men at once.

It may not be without interest here to take another glance at the last Battle of Plevna, and see what military lessons can be drawn from it. In the first place, the lesson already taught by the previous affair, which was only too clear to anybody who had eyes to see—the madness of attacking trenches defended by breechloaders by assault—has been enforced and confirmed, and the Russian generals have at last learned it at an expense of 15,000 more men. But there are other things which they may learn from it which they ought

to have learned in school. In the first place they should know that artillery fire, to be effective against such positions, should be directed, not against earth, but against men. Now, the four days during which the Russians shelled the Turkish positions they never once advanced their infantry. The consequence was that the Turks were not obliged to advance theirs. They kept their troops stowed comfortably out of the way of the shells, and only put them forward when they saw the Russians were preparing for the assault. Naturally the Russian shell-fire did them very little harm, and for all the effect it had upon the result, they might as well have made the assault the first day. The Russian infantry should have been advanced as if to attack, this would have compelled the Turkish infantry to occupy their trenches where they would have been exposed to the fire of the Russian shrapnel. I do not believe much in modern artillery anyhow, except where the fire of a large number of guns can be concentrated on a small space, but if it is to be of any use at all, it must be by directing it against men and not heaps of earth.

With the recapture of the redoubts taken by Skobeleff the attack upon Plevna ended. Up to that moment there was still a hope that the attack might be continued, and that success might finally crown so many heroic efforts. The Russians had taken three strong positions; could they get two or three more equally important Plevna would inevitably be theirs. There seems to have been some idea of renewing the attack, for Skobeleff, I am told on Wednesday afternoon was requested to hold his position a few hours longer, even after he had reported several times that the place was untenable. Only a few hours longer! When men were going down by the hundreds, and companies and battalions under the terrible fire of the Turks were shrivelling up like green leaves in a furnace flame.

The melancholy part of it is, that generals who send men by the thousand to perish under fire have themselves no idea of what fire is. They have no grip of the battle, no feel of the fire and they have no other way of discovering that a position is untenable, or a line of resistance too strong but in seeing their soldiers in flight after having performed perhaps prodigies of heroism and of valour. So Skobeleff was requested to wait a few hours while the headquarter staff would reflect on the situation. The redoubts taken by Skobeleff as well as the redoubt of Grivic the other positions might have been attacked with success. Skobeleff asked for reinforcements, but not to hold the redoubt, for so

far as the redoubt was tenable he had enough troops to hold it as long as it could be held. He asked for troops to continue the attack upon the redoubt of Krishine, or upon the entrenched camp on the other side of Plevna, or he would undertake to hold the place while something was attempted on some other point; only whatever was to be done would have to be done quickly. But the morning wore away with the continued attacks of the Turks, continually repulsed and continually renewed, and the whole Russian army lay quiet all day long and watched that heroic struggle and did nothing. This inactivity of the Russians allowed the Turks to finally concentrate in the evening an overwhelming force against Skobelev and to overpower him. The headquarter staff could not make up its mind what to do, and while meditating on the subject the redoubts were lost.

It is true, as I have already stated, that General Kriloff took the responsibility of sending a regiment which had made the unsuccessful assault of the day before, and which was reduced from 2,600 to 1,000 men, a regiment utterly unfit to go into action; and even it arrived too late. It is likewise true that a fresh regiment was sent, which arrived an hour after the redoubts were lost, and thus just in time to assure the retreat. But sending these regiments, even had they arrived in time, was a mistake. They would, of course, have enabled Skobelev to hold the redoubts a few hours longer; but this would only have resulted in a still greater loss of men, without any object. Unless it was intended to continue the attack from this side, the redoubts should have been abandoned as soon as the attack failed on other points, for holding them these twenty-four hours resulted in a loss of some 4,000 men. If, on the contrary, it was intended to continue the attack from this side, then a division, and not a regiment, should have been sent to Skobelev. The whole plan of attack was a mistake; but there is little doubt that the attack, having been begun, might have been, and should have been, continued the next morning. The line of defence had been broken in two places. Had the Russians concentrated all their strength on these two points early next morning, and renewed the assault with vigour, they would, in my opinion, have carried the place. Their loss would have been fearful, but the army of Osman Pacha would have been destroyed, and the way would have been open to Adrianople. As it is, 15,000 men have been lost, and, because they have been lost, the Russians are not quite so near Adrianople as they were before.

All the mistakes of the campaign have been repeated in miniature in the attack upon Plevna, with a fidelity which

shows how little the headquarter staff have profited from previous blunders. Their first intention was to await the arrival of the Guard before beginning the attack, and unless they had adopted the plan I had already sketched out, of abandoning the line of the Jantra, and making a rapid concentration of the whole force of both armies upon Plevna, this was the only possible thing to do, for to attack Plevna with less than one hundred thousand men was simply folly. Suddenly it occurred to them, that if they waited for the arrival of the Guard they would be thrown into another campaign. This was a consideration that might have occurred to them at first, and which should have necessitated a complete change in the whole plan of campaign. When it finally did occur to them, it resulted in a spasmodic fit of energy and this last attack upon Plevna. But instead of bringing together a force sufficient for the purpose, that is, a hundred thousand men, they hurriedly scrape together what they could without interfering with the army of the Czarewitch, and make the attack with 65 000 bayonets in the forlorn hope of taking Plevna, and thus being able to reach Adrianople this year.

It was a forlorn hope only, and not even General Levitsky believed in success. It was a plan that did not merit success, and it was only the unexpected valour of the Roumanians—an element nobody had counted upon, the sublime bravery of the Russian soldier, and the splendid dash and generalship of Skobelev, that ever made the result doubtful for a moment. I know that the forces brought up during this last attack have been estimated at a hundred thousand, but I also know that the estimate is greatly exaggerated. I know that the whole force of General Zotoff, up to the time of the arrival of the 2nd and 3rd Divisions, did not amount to 30,000 men, that these two divisions between them, after the loss incurred by the second in the affair of Loftcha, did not add an effective of more than 15,000 men, thus making the Russian force 45,000. As to the Roumanians, I know that their army is estimated at 32,000 men—on paper—but, when you deduct from this the cavalry, the sick, the men detached for guarding communications and for various other duties, and last, but not least, the difference between the complement on paper and the actual number of bayonets, their effective did not give more than 20,000—or 65,000 bayonets in all.

The attack, therefore, was made in the first place with an insufficient number of troops, for the Turks had an equal or perhaps a greater number. But the question is not in war to have a numerical superiority upon every point, but to have it

upon one or two important points. An inferior force, skilfully handled, will often suffice to beat a much superior force, and the Russians who had, when we consider the advantages of the position held by the Turks, an inferior force or power, should have endeavoured to make up for this by concentration against one or two points, only making at the same time demonstrations on the whole line. This would have given them the required numerical superiority on the given points. In a conversation I had with Skobelev before the battle, he agreed with me that the plan of a general attack was a mistake, and the result proved it. Had the attack been confined to the Grivica redoubt and the redoubts on the Lofteha road, and demonstrations made by Krüdener and Kriloff, instead of those furious attacks, repulsed in such a bloody manner, the loss incurred by Krüdener and Kriloff would have been avoided, and the 9th and 4th Corps would have been fresh for the renewal of the attack next day on the points of the Turkish line which gave way.

The plan of a general attack was in short the reproduction in miniature of the general plan of the campaign,—instead of concentration, the distribution of forces already too small. That the Russian staff should have adhered to this plan, and should still adhere to it after the repeated disasters of Plevna, shows that they are simply incapable of profiting by the lessons of the war, and that the Russians, with one of the best armies in the world, will be beaten as long as the present staff remains in command, by what may be technically considered one of the worst.

In my opinion there are, besides the plan of a siege and starvation, two ways of taking such a place as Plevna. The first is the plan of an assault, made with about three times as many men as the Russians had in the last affair, that is about 120,000, and handled in the manner of Skobelev by hurling them against the positions, brigade after brigade, until by mere force of momentum and bravery they sweep everything before them like the waves of a rapidly rising sea. The loss to be incurred in such a plan is fearful, but the loss of the enemy would be greater still, for the reason that wherever there is a crossing of bayonets, the beaten side must be simply annihilated. Had the Russians attacked Plevna in this manner, they would have lost 30,000 men, but the army of Osman Pacha would have been destroyed. Not 5,000 would have escaped to tell the tale.

The other plan is more slow, and perhaps not more sure, but it requires a far smaller force for its execution. It is that of advancing by means of flying saps—narrow shallow trenches,

rapidly constructed under cover of night, or a heavy rifle fire. A man can, with a shovel in ordinary ground, and stimulated by an enemy's fire, put himself under cover in three minutes, and he will make himself a comfortable rifle-pit in five. Give the Russian army shovels, and they will dig their way into Plevna in a week at the outside. The trouble is, that while in the Roumanian army every two men out of three have shovels, in the Russian army there are only five hundred shovels to the division, or about one to every twenty men, and thus in a war against the Turks, which the whole military history of the Russians might have taught them was destined from the first to become a war of sieges, a kind of war in which the shovel plays a no less important rôle than the rifle! This plan I have every reason to believe was under discussion, and had to be laid aside owing to the want of shovels.

So far it must be acknowledged that the Turkish generals have shown far more skill in the conduct of the campaign than the Russian. Their plan consists simply in placing their soldiers in trenches and supplying them with cartridges, bread, and rice. But true generalship after all consists, not in plan by a theoretical army, but in the means required to reach the required ends. In this, which is the true test of generalship, the Turks have excelled, and they have taught a bitter lesson to the French generals, who during the late war with Germany showed their incapacity, and not only their incapacity, but their unwillingness, to fight with anything but the army of their dreams.

I have spoken of Russian generals in a previous letter, and I may add another reason to the ones I then gave for the want of capacity and talent displayed among them. In the first place, all those high in command are very old men. They are men who studied the military art forty and even fifty years ago, since which time the science of war has undergone most important changes and developments—a revolution, in short. In addition to this, they are men who, for the most part, never look in a book, and who rarely read a newspaper, and appear to be utterly oblivious of the march of progress and of science, especially in the military art. Their whole lives may be said to have been passed in one occupation, their whole minds, whatever they ever had, concentrated on one object, and that one of the most trivial to which the human mind can descend—card playing. They have done nothing else, thought of nothing else, for years. Their minds have rusted until they are as dull, as heavy, and as incapable of receiving new impressions as the veriest clodhopper. Called from their

card-tables by the trumpet of war, they rise, rub their eyes, look round them completely bewildered, and are as thoroughly out of the current of modern war as if they had been asleep for forty years. Not even Rip van Winkle, with his rusty gun dropping to pieces after his long sleep, was more bewildered and lost than the majority of these poor old generals suddenly thrown into the campaign at the heads of their brigades, divisions, and corps.

It may be asked why the Emperor does not send these old dotards back to their card-tables, and replace them by younger men and men of talent, of which, after all, the Russian army is not destitute. Well, in the first place, there is the tradition, according to which no functionary must be removed or disgraced as long as it can be helped—from some absurd idea that the prestige of the Government would suffer. The Government would be acknowledging its own fallibility. The result is that the Government, instead of renouncing, assumes the responsibility of all the stupidity, of all the idiocy, all the perversity, and all the dishonesty of the functionary. Then it must be confessed, the kind heart of the Emperor has much to do in retaining these old incapables in their positions. He cannot bear the idea of depriving an old, and as he considers a faithful, public servant of his position, and thus disgracing him, and so unconsciously prefers to sacrifice the lives of thousands of brave fellows to this misplaced feeling of kindness.

One more fact while I am on the subject, illustrative of the way things are managed in the Russian army, for which the headquarter staff must be held responsible. At the time of Suleiman Pacha's attack upon the Shipka Pass, although the pass had then been in the hands of the Russians for something like six weeks, the plan of the pass and positions had not been made. This is a fact which, for military men, speaks volumes. And yet such men as these have dared to take the direction and command of an army of 300,000 men. It is simply madness.

The following letter treats of the posture of military and political affairs in October, as seen from a Turkish point of view :—

:: CONSTANTINOPLE, *October 7th*.—It was officially announced on Wednesday that Suleiman Pacha is to replace Mehemet Ali as the Serdar Ekrem, or Commander-in-Chief. Every one has been trying to guess the reason why Suleiman is thus honoured. That Mehemet Ali would be removed has been

considered probable for several days. He has not shown himself specially active, nor displayed remarkable military ability, and no doubt failed signally in the action of the 21st ult. Above all he is of Givour origin, and unless he could have been uniformly successful, he was pretty sure to arouse the jealousy of the generals under him. But that Suleiman should be his successor is difficult to understand.

Suleiman is not a coward, nor is he destitute of energy. But his previous services are not of a kind one would have thought to warrant his promotion to the most important post in the Turkish army.

altogether incapable

his own. When he

Gourko he pushed on rapidly to the front and made the successive attempts to force the Shipka Pass which your readers know so well. But both in Montenegro and in the Shipka his one great rule in war seems to have been to pound away at whatever opposed him, whether an army or a stone wall. If the war between Russia and Turkey is to be conducted on the pounding principle, and each party is ready to sacrifice any number of men, provided that the enemy can be made to lose at least an equal number, there can be little doubt, I fancy, which army will soonest be exhausted. In Montenegro and at the Shipka, Suleiman can hardly have lost less than 40,000 men, and these beyond a doubt among the best soldiers which the Sultan possesses—war, in fact, under him has been mere butchery.

Notwithstanding the successes of the Turks at Plevna, the depression in the capital during the past fortnight has been very great. It is noticed as a significant fact, that Turkish consulates have fallen whenever there has been a report of a Turkish victory, and have risen when on the contrary the telegraph has given us news of a Turkish defeat. It is not merely that the Christians of the capital—Greeks, Armenians and Bulgarians alike—have no stomach for the war, that was to be expected, nor is it only that the stoppage of commerce with Russia has put an end to the Black Sea trade, upon which a considerable portion of the population of the capital lives, that the increased taxes upon an impoverished people have brought thousands to the verge of starvation, that the large mass of Government officials—most of whom are Turks—have been unpaid for months, and have had all of them to submit to very large reductions in their salaries, that the issue of *caimé* or paper money, has reduced the earnings of boatmen, porters, and day labourers generally to nearly half what it was before the war, and that native

merchants, as well as foreigners, can get no money out of the Government for goods which they have supplied.

These are the incidents, in great part the natural incidents, of war; and, provided the war should be successful, would be borne usually by a people as inevitable ills worth bearing for the sake of the benefits which were to be derived from the struggle. But among the Turks themselves there is the feeling that the war, beyond preventing their immediate destruction, or causing a lessening of their territory, can only be disastrous. As one of the most thoughtful among the Turks said a few days ago:—"We know that Europe will never allow us to increase our territory, no matter what our success. Servia, Roumania, Montenegro, and Greece, can never again be added to Turkey, be our success what it may. The struggle, too, is between us and the rest of the inhabitants of the Empire. We have to supply all the fighting men; and the thousands who have already been killed are a terrible drain on the fighting population of the Empire."

The Turks themselves feel that it is, to say the least, very improbable that at the end of the war they will be in a better position, even though they win, than they were before the war began. England, it is clear, or nearly so, is not going to help them, and every victory they gain is so much loss merely to preserve the *status quo* of their country before the war. They, too, have an inkling, I fancy, of what M. Thiers meant when he said, that he had more dread of Russia defeated than of Russia defeating. Let me say also, in passing, as I have often said before, that none of the inhabitants of European Turkey wish to call Russia master. The argument I have often used from the analogy of the hatred of Greece towards Russia is sound—that if the Christians of the Empire were decently governed, or, better still, governed themselves, they would be hostile to Russia too. Roumania and Servia are the tools, willing or unwilling, of Russia, because their dread of being absorbed by Turkey overcomes their dread of being annexed by Russia. Take away the first, as Europe did for Greece, and the latter becomes at once prominent. Russia defeated means Russia making the war one of life or death, and playing the game of sacrificing man for man.

Turks know that by Russia warfare has always been conducted with an almost wanton disregard of life, and that she has always shown herself a dogged and an obstinate enemy. If the war is to be conducted through one, or two, or three more campaigns, such as that which is now drawing to a close, while the drain of men upon Russia will be terrible, it will be proportionately very much greater upon the Turks. Russia,

bankrupt, will even then only be in the condition in which Turkey has been for the last two years. Unless, therefore, Europe interferes, the endurance of Russia is likely to be far greater than that of Turkey, and the terms which will be exacted by her heavier than those which she would have required had the war been finished this autumn. Such, I believe are the opinions of the most thoughtful among the Turks, among whom I would class the Sultan himself, who is reputed to have been always opposed to the war, and who deeply feels the enormous sacrifices which have already had to be made, and the small amount of benefits which can be derived therefrom.

Yesterday's Turkish papers announce that the Government has decided to call out all the remaining reserves which have not yet been summoned. Most of us were under the impression that this had already been done, but it is asserted that there are yet 160,000 men who can be added to the army. The redifs or militia have long been called out, including a large body of men who have served their terms in the army. Those who remain, the mustafez, and who are said to form so large a body, are the Landsturm or last reserve. When it is remembered that the Turkish army comprises the whole of the male Moslem population between certain ages, it may be understood how terrible is the drain upon the population of which I have spoken. That which makes the matter worse, not only for the Turks, but for the country, is that while the Christian villages may have a redundant population, or may at least be able to spare a considerable number of men, nearly the whole male population of hundreds of Moslem villages has thus been taken away. Harvests are neglected, cultivation is at a standstill, and the deepest distress prevails in many places, because the whole of the bread-winners are away.

In estimating the surprises of the war, the fact should be taken into account that the failure of the Turks in putting down the insurrection in Bosnia

Montenegro, and to a less

extent a failure with Turks drawn

With the exception of a not very large detachment from the district round about Beyrout, the Turkish army eighteen months ago was hardly recruited at all from Asiatic Turkey. After the beginning of the war with Russia, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt were drawn upon for a supply of men. The Egyptians may be dismissed, since by all accounts they are worth little as soldiers, even during a summer campaign, and in winter will probably be worth still less.

The men from Asia Minor are not merely the best soldiers

Turkey can produce, but form as good material for making soldiers as any in the world. Many of them are mountaineers, all of them have been inured to hardship, and have, indeed, known little else. Most of them come from the occupations of the country rather than from those of towns, and even those who have lived in the towns have been porters or boatmen, or camel-drivers, or engaged in some other out-of-door occupation, which has helped to make them strong and hardy. The great majority are agriculturists, and as shepherds or farm labourers have been used to roughing it. They have moreover all been trained more or less to the use of arms. The result of their previous training is, that men who have not been put into uniform before have been converted into fair soldiers after a few days' drill, and when sent to the front have proved cool soldiers and good shots. The very want of success which the Turks everywhere encounter when brought face to face in business with keen Arabs or Greeks or Armenians, has driven the Turks, or kept them, to the land and to occupations which are the best training for such soldiers as the Turkish Government has need of. The result has been that the successes gained lately have been such as could not have been foreseen by those who judged only from the failures I have mentioned. The mountaineers of Anatolia and Armenia have done that which their co-religionists from European Turkey entirely failed to do. These men will, I apprehend, stand a winter as well as Russians. What the Syrians and Egyptians will be able to do remains to be seen.

We are now in the midst of the month of Ramazan. One of the five precepts of the Mohammedan religion is the keeping of this month as a fast. It is kept strictly except, I believe, by soldiers, who are permitted by Moslem law to disregard it. The Turkish day consists of the evening and the morning; in other words, lasts from sunrise to the following sunset. During this period in the whole of the month of Ramazan no true believer either eats, drinks, or smokes. The result is that a very much smaller amount of business is transacted during this month than during any other of the year. Eating commences at sunset, and is usually followed by a certain amount of festivity, after which come a few hours' sleep. In the Turkish quarters, two hours before daylight, the rattle of harsh drums, accompanied by harsher voices, and the sound of nondescript instruments, awakes the faithful to the fact that the time has come to eat enough to last them until sunset. This meal is concluded just before the sunrise gun, and then the faithful again betake themselves to sleep. Practically

they are good for nothing in the way of work during the rest of the day

This fact is recognized and in the public offices and in the law courts there is a general suspension of business as Turkish officials like other mortals, are incapable of work upon an empty stomach. In justice, however to the poorer class of Turks, I ought to add that they manage to do a fair share of hard work, even during Ramadan. I have seen woodcutters whom either good will or necessity has compelled to work during these days, notwithstanding the fact that they could not even take a draught of water, while the perspiration was streaming from every pore. It was impossible not to feel kindly towards these poor fellows as they asked, time after time how they rolled up their lon have their lon gun (Turkish time) announced that the sun had sunk below the horizon

Yesterday morning, at about ten o'clock, four very loud and almost simultaneous explosions greatly alarmed the inhabitants of this city and the vicinity, and all sorts of rumours were immediately afloat as to the cause. The utmost excitement prevailed crowds of people congregated in almost every street, and many of them were pale with terror. The explosions were caused by a — — the Government

explosion of some grains of powder while the stone used in working the powder was turning. The four mills were in a moment destroyed, and a great number of lives variously estimated at from 50 to 200 were lost. It is impossible as yet to ascertain the precise number, but I fear that the latter is more likely to be nearer the truth. A great quantity of machinery and powder was destroyed though the Turkish Government estimates the loss at only £10 000, and says that it feels confident that the loss can be repaired within a fortnight at the latest. The Imperial cartridge manufactory is close by the scene of the explosion and had that building also blown up the loss to the Government at the present moment would have been almost irreparable.

The greatest promptitude was exhibited in hurrying to the rescue of the sufferers. The medical staff of the Stafford house Committee instantly proceeded to the scene of the accident. The Government has already given orders for the immediate reconstruction of the mills, and the wounded have

been taken under the Sultan's protection, whatever that may imply, and are to be cared for at the expense of the State. Great anxiety was manifested amongst the British colony on the accident becoming known, as several Englishmen in the Ottoman service are employed in the neighbourhood. Only one Englishman, however, was near the spot at the time, and he was not seriously wounded. The sufferers are mostly Mussulmans and Armenians. I happened to be on the Marmora at the time, and not more than three miles from the mills, which are on the sea shore. My attention was suddenly aroused by a sound which startled all on board the small steamer by which I was a passenger, for we took it to be an explosion on board. This was almost immediately followed by another, and then again by two others in rapid succession. Men and women ran to and fro in an excited state for an instant, half expecting to find themselves blown up. Some of the passengers on the bridge had, however, seen the explosion on shore, and the word was at once passed that the powder factory had blown up. We then all saw a huge pear-shaped mass of smoke shooting up into the sky, and knew that we were safe. I learn at the last moment from a medical man who had just returned from the spot, and who was there yesterday shortly after the accident, that there were probably not less than 150 persons killed. Though he was among the first to arrive after the accident, many bodies had already been hurried into hastily prepared graves, and at one containing Armenians a service was being as hastily read over by an Armenian priest.

The following letter, which appeared yesterday in the *Stamboul*, is from Ali Suavi Effendi, who is at the head of the chief Turkish college here:—

"I have received many letters. Some ask me to preach in the Mosque of Sheik Zadé-Bachi; others to give my appreciation of the situation. I am going, therefore, to give you my appreciation on this subject, because next week may witness great events. All my appreciations of European policy may be summed up in the following words. [*The italics are in the original*]:—*The source of every political evil, of every crime, is the English Government.* Those who can understand this phrase will have no difficulty to overcome. In Europe there is no policy, there is no justice, there is no humanity. These words I have not taken from any book, nor from the newspapers. I have studied the events, and it is the events themselves that have inspired me. Neither must it be believed that I thus expressed myself against my friends who are in Europe, and who can have no

knowledge of what I write While I was in Europe I told them, "You don't know, you don't understand" Many men read, but few understand I find me ten men able to understand, and all the difficulties will disappear To make the English understand their ignorance would benefit everybody, but especially the Ottomans This is why I don't give up my correspondence with Englishmen They say, "England ought to help us, she has not done so, and she will not do so What do these words mean? Where is England and what is she? I have studied England, therefore I know well that all the evils from which the world suffers come from the English Government I believe that if England reforms herself the world will equally reform itself If the English, cause of every ill, were really bad people, I would not trouble about them, they are good enough, but the reason why they are the tools of Russia is ignorance England cannot make war, for she possesses nothing England possesses altogether 12,000 cavalry, she has only 6,000 horses England does not possess more than fifty ironclads, seven only can make war Her mines of coal and of iron, &c, are used up The manufactories of England are cut out by those of Brussels England is henceforth a porter (hamal), who, in order to live, must carry goods and merchandise from one to another Why has England fallen so low? England has plunged herself into the abyss of debt in order to aggrandise Russia England has attempted the dismemberment of Turkey and of three other States in favour of Russia and of herself England has undergone very material losses The knowledge which I possess upon these attempts is drawn from English official documents If these documents had attracted your attention you would have comprehended too These documents are printed but you and the English don't understand If ignorance were blotted out from England the blood of thousands of men leaving thousands of orphans and widows would not have been shed, and milliards would not have been added to the national debt It is necessary to say that our conduct, if it does service to the Ottoman Empire, will also render service to the rest of the world—that is to say, with our wish to put the whole world in order There are Englishmen who work with us In consequence, and in order to make you understand what I have said, evil spirits will end in order to show the ignorance of those who lend their ears to her declarations—I intend to give lectures, as I have

already done, at Galata Serai. You must, therefore, attentively read and understand these lessons." The only importance which can be attached to this letter arises from the fact that it comes from the Director of the Imperial Lyceum. Even the last paragraph is not so absurd as it seems.

While the Russian army had done so little to distinguish itself either in Europe or Asia, and the small Black Sea fleet could not venture to put to sea, many feats of individual officers showed what might be expected of the Navy under more favourable circumstances. The expedition described in the following letter, most merciful in its object, was made at a time when fast and powerful Turkish ironclads held unchallenged possession of the Black Sea.

SEBASTOPOL. *September 11th.*---I returned yesterday from the expedition which I told you the *Vesta* and *Vladimir* were about to undertake. The result has been most successful, and at the same time bloodless. Considering the danger of the voyage, and the skill with which Captain Baranoff has executed it, I think it will be allowed to equal anything in the history of blockade running.

We left Sebastopol at midnight yesterday week, the *Vesta* leading as senior. Every light had been carefully covered, and even the port-holes of our cabins plastered over with felt, so as to exclude any possibility of a gleam of light discovering our whereabouts to the enemy. Our vessel was painted a bluish grey, so like the colour of the sea that at a hundred yards it was barely distinguishable. In this phantom guise, on one of the darkest nights that can be imagined, we glided in silence into the open sea, the only sounds being the steady throb of our screw, and about every ten minutes the call of the officer on watch to the men stationed in the foretop. This call, which for eight days and nights has never ceased, will long remain impressed on my memory. "Foretop, keep a good look-out," still rang in my ears, as last night, for the first time during a week, I slept for more than an hour at a time.

When clear of the land the captain informed us of our destination, which was Kertch. This port has not been entered since the war began, and though, of course, the movements of the Turkish fleet are only to be conjectured from telegrams, the captain told me he fully expected to have a battle before arriving, for several ironclads were supposed to be in that

part of the Black Sea. As the day broke the lovely south coast stood out in all its grandeur. At sunrise we were rushing past Aloupka Castle, whose towers and terraces, flooded in light, contrasted well with the surrounding scenery. Here man has exhausted his ingenuity in rearing a fabric unique and unrivalled, but even this grandest effort of human genius, situated as it is, serves only to mark how insignificant is the work of our hands when compared with that of nature. Towering in the background of the castle, Al Petri looks down from a height of 1,500 feet, and seems in its rugged majesty to frown at the toy which the vanity of man has carved for its footstool. On past Oriandri, Livadia, Yalta, and Massandri, the *Vesta* and her consort sped. At breakfast time we were half way on our journey, and as the sun was sinking I had the pleasure of congratulating the captain on having successfully accomplished the first step of the expedition, and on our being the first Russian steamer that had entered Kertch since the war broke out.

As the captain told me he should only land for his orders I did not go on shore, and in a few hours the throbbing of the screw and the call to the foretop brought me on deck to find that we were once more on the sullen Luxine. The captain now explained to me the object of the expedition. A large number of wounded men were at a place called Gagri, not far from Sukhum Kaleh, and the admiral had asked Baranoff if he would endeavour to embark them and convey them to Novorossisk where there was an hospital. The odds were considerably against our ever getting there, much less returning, but brave men do not calculate odds when their comrades are in want of help. If the whole Turkish fleet had been known to be at anchor in Gagri Bay, Baranoff would only have altered his plans but not his course. His plans at present were to proceed direct to Gagri, to offer battle to any single ironclad he met, and if attacked by several to endeavour to escape, failing which he should take to the boats and blow the *Vesta* up. Fortune favours the brave, and after thirty hours of excitement we dropped anchor in Gagri Bay.

"Heaven grant we may find all ready for us, was the prayer of the captain as the armed boats left for the shore, a prayer which from the desolate appearance of the place, and the fact that not a soul was visible, I feared would not be granted. As we neared the shore the sign manual of the Turk was plainly to be distinguished. Every house had been burnt to the ground, a few dogs, a cat, and a Cossack boy inhabited or rather perambulated the ruins, the Anglo Indian telegraph

had been torn down for at least a mile on the southern side of the town, and no signs of our being expected were to be found. About half-a-mile to the north a Russian telegraph officer was engaged in arranging communication with Europe, and he told us there were neither wounded nor unwounded soldiers nearer than Gadahout, a coast village about half-way between Gagri and Sukhum-Kaleh; so, after spending some hours in the vain hope that news would arrive, our captain recalled the boats, and we steamed on to Gadahout, before which interesting village we dropped anchor about half-an-hour previous to sunset.

[will now mention two of the officers of the *Vesta*, whose names, if the war continues, will be public property. The second in command on board the *Vesta* is Prince Galitzin Galovkin. This officer, who is of immense size and strength, is the inheritor of more than one princely title and has also a large fortune. When the war broke out he rejoined the navy and was appointed to his present position. His escape from death during the late battle is almost miraculous, and his coolness and courage from beginning to end of that trying five hours were as remarkable as his escape.

At about 10 p.m. on Thursday night lights in front of us and at sea were visible, and we prepared for action. The Prince, as second in command, had determined if an expedition with the torpedo boats became necessary to take the command of it, and now, to all appearance, the hour was come, for even the phosphoric light, indicative of some immense body moving rapidly, was plainly visible, and the order to prepare the torpedo launches went forth. With as little noise as possible these small boats, with their heroic crews, were in the water, and with the Prince as leader they had left for what was very probably a fatal task. As I stood on the bridge trying to make out the arrangement of the expedition, I could hear Galitzin's voice giving his orders as coolly as if he were superintending the capture of a shoal of herrings or sprats, instead of conducting a forlorn hope against perhaps several monster ironclads. The boats had scarcely left the side when the sky darkened and a storm arose. The captain at once recalled the expedition, and under cover of what was now a small tempest we ploughed onward in safety, and for ought I or any one else can tell, we may have passed within 100 yards of the whole Turkish fleet. Next to Prince Galitzin on this expedition should be mentioned the torpedo officer, Eugene Romanovitch, a youth in years, and when off duty the leader in everything savouring of fun and mischief. He speaks English, and we have fraternized greatly.

As soon as we had anchored I went on shore with the Prince, our crew, of course, being armed. On landing the only signs of life were some miserable looking curs picnicking on horse bones and sheepskins. Bullock carts, empty boxes, old clothes, &c., were strewed in every direction, but what had been the fate of their owners, or who those owners were, was left to our imagination. A few yards from the wharf a felucca, about thirty feet long, was anchored, but in our anxiety to land we postponed to ourselves the pleasure of visiting it, more especially as we believed the village to be in Russian possession. The houses were only about 100 yards from the shore, and to these we now approached. At the entrance to the main street we found a Russian soldier, who at first we thought was wounded, as he could not speak, and looked dreadfully ill. It happily appeared afterwards that he had only lost the use of his tongue, and not the member itself. We then proceeded to call at several of the houses, but found no one at home, and as it was now getting dark, and we had to visit the felucca, the Prince gave the order to retire. As we were pulling to the felucca we heard firing—first, a few straggling shots, and then a fusillade—but concluding it was some skirmish inland we took no notice, and boarded our prize from both sides. On going below we found it freighted with firearms, and amongst them some very nice repeating rifles of the Winchester system. As it was now nearly dark, the captain recalled us and at once put to sea steering direct for Constantinople. I asked him his reasons, and he told me he felt sure that no ironclads would be looking for him in that direction, and that if he was seen his course would perhaps prevent his being interfered with, the Turks not having yet realized the consummate impudence of these little cruisers.

The captain's clever plan met with complete success, and having given all the ironclads the slip, at about one a.m., he headed again for Gadahout, having determined to make a descent with all the boats and search the place thoroughly. At six a.m. we were at anchor, and now the scene was exciting. A mitrailleuse was mounted in the launch, and about 100 sailors commanded by Prince Galitzin, were ready. The captain's boy, Terracuta, a fine lad of fifteen was armed to the teeth, and giggling with joy as I tumbled into the launch alongside of him, and I verily believe there was not a man left on board who was not hoping that reinforcements would soon be needed. As we approached the shore a few men appeared, at first in rather a hostile attitude, but soon perceiving that we were Russians a wild hurrah was given, and in an instant

from behind every rock and bush, men who, for the last few minutes had been covering us with their rifles, rushed down to the beach, and the scene as we landed could not easily be described. It appeared that the day before, only some hours previous to our arrival, a Turkish steamer painted grey like ourselves, and doubtless one of the ironclads in search of us, had put into Gadahout Bay, but had left almost immediately. The small Russian detachment, seeing another grey steamer accompanied by a black one arriving about sunset, naturally concluded that it was the Turkish vessel returned with a reinforcement, and consequently when they saw we were landing they all hid themselves. I asked one soldier to show me where he had been hidden, and he took me to a ruined house next door to one I had entered the night before with two sailors. I asked him if he had seen me before. He grinned, did that ingenuous youth, and answered, "kakniett," which may be rendered "rather." The shots we had heard were fired at us, for it turned out that the felucca was their prize first, and their feelings became too strong for them when they saw what they thought was the Moslem boarding it. We were now informed by the officer that if we returned to Gagri we should find the troops and the wounded all ready for us; so after transferring on board their wounded—I think about half a dozen, and a Turkish prisoner, who evidently found himself in clover—we returned to Gagri, towing the felucca with us for the purpose of utilizing it for the transport of the wounded, &c.

We anchored in Gagri Bay about noon, and now a change had indeed taken place. The martial strains of a band were heard, and on landing we found a force of about 2,000 of as fine-looking fellows as one could wish to see. The shore, which yesterday was desolate, to-day teemed with life; herds of oxen, bullock carts, native conveyances of every description, groups of mountaineers in their picturesque dresses and gipsy-like encampments were visible as far as the eye could reach. The commanding officer had everything ready, not only for the embarkation of about 100 wounded men, but also for that of a battalion of about 600 men, whom the general required transport for as far as Taopse, a march of ten days through the mountain passes, but only about twelve hours by sea. Our captain was quite alive to the danger of crowded decks, but with the usual celerity and silence boats arrive and depart, the mountains of heavy baggage melt away from the landing place, a long file of wounded are carefully accommodated in the felucca which has been forced up against the ricketty old wharf, and in about four hours from the time we anchored

every man was on board, and even the commissariat department had sent the beef and other necessities for the troops. There remains now only to embark the General Shalkoonikoff, who was coming with us and we had to proceed to a place some twelve miles further up the coast to meet him.

The signalman on one of the highest posts on shore now announced the smoke of a steamer to the north of us and the masts of another to the south. With the pleasant prospect of being rammed behind and before, we slipped out of Gagri Bay and were soon enveloped in our usual gloom. About ten p.m. Prince Galitzin went on shore at a place called Sandripsh for the General, and having returned shortly with his Excellency, we steamed on for Taopse arriving about six in the morning, when the disembarking of the troops was carried out with the same admirable ease that distinguished the embarkation. I have had a great deal of experience in embarking and disembarking troops in peace and war time, and in almost all parts of our dominion, but I never saw anything to equal the rapidity and ease with which the Russian overcomes apparently insurmountable difficulties. It must be remembered also that a Russian soldier carries a heavier weight than ours, that he is a larger man, and consequently takes up more space in a boat, and, finally, that the camp equipage of 600 men in its lightest marching order is about as vast as that of an English division under similar circumstances. We left Taopse early in the day and at sunset steamed into Novorossiska where the General and the wounded were landed. After this the work of the gallant little cruisers having been so successfully accomplished we passed for the last time into the open sea and challenged the blockade of the powerful navy of Turkey by sweeping it from the Caucasus to Sebastopol, and from thence to Odessa.

It may be interesting to the admiral in command of the iron clads to learn that the little *Vesta* and her consort have during the last 200 hours steamed over 1807 miles of the Black Sea and during that time they have only twice entered a port—Gagri Taopse, and Gadahout being open roadsteads. Having observed frequent mention of the Russian Black Sea fleet in English papers, and as many of your readers may be under the impression that such a force exists, I will describe it—three old cargo boats of the Russian Steam Navigation Company and the Emperor's yacht none of these are plated or defended by armour, and with the exception of the yacht they might almost serve as lunchboxes to Turkey's powerful ironclads. Their want of armour is however, balanced by the devoted courage of the officers and men and though it

can hardly be expected that they will be able to continue to defy with impunity the monster ironclads everywhere on the look-out for them, I think it by no means improbable that before they are sent to the bottom the navy of Turkey may have still further proof that the race is not always to the swift, or the battle to the strong, and that the little cargo-boats of the company will again challenge with success the much vaunted blockade and supremacy of the Black Sea.

CHAPTER XIX.

CRISIS OF THE CAMPAIGN IN ASIA.

The Camp of Mukhtar Pacha—The Turkish Soldier at Prayer—Two Notable Deserters—The Russian Camp—Arrival of Reinforcements—The Battle of October 2nd—Capture of the Great Yagni—Russian Mistakes—Renewal of the Fighting—Preparations for a Grand Attack—General Lazareff's Great Flanking March—The Field Telegraph—The Battle of Aladja Dagh—Complete Overthrow and Flight of Mukhtar Pacha—Large Capture of Prisoners and Guns—Condition of Kars.

HAVING driven the Russians from all the posts they had occupied between Kars and Erzeroum on the one line, and Bayazid and Erzeroum on the other,—having reduced the main body of the Russian army to a defensive position before Alexandropol and compelled its left wing to stand helplessly by while one of the least competent of Turkish commanders actually crossed the Russian frontier in the direction of Erivan,—Mukhtar Pacha had reached the measure of his allotted success. From this time his arrangements began to lose the impress of his former prudence, although weeks were to elapse before their character was to be brought to a decisive test, and to be exposed by his utter and irreparable defeat. The following letters show the course of military events until the Turkish Army was broken in pieces almost under the walls of Kars :—

□ HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF MUKHTAR PACHA, *Sept. 17th.*—Now that Ramazan has arrived, people seem more intent on their religion than on their military exercises. I don't mean to say that the latter are neglected. Mukhtar Pacha, as rigid a

Moslem as exists in the Sultan's dominions, is too good a soldier to allow that But the interval is well taken up with

worship

At this austere season, from the moment the dawn colours the eastern sky until the Ramazan gun booms out into the evening air, not a morsel of food crosses the lips of the soldiers, not even a drop of water, and over and over again, when, seeing the wistful eye of a trooper turned towards my lighted chibouk, I have proffered my tobacco pouch, it has been motioned away with a self denial worthy of an eremite of the wilderness And each of the many times a day is the long dawn, wailing cry of the Muezzin rises above the murmur of the camp, soldiers are to be seen hurrying eagerly to prayer as to a banquet, and unhappy seems the man on duty who cannot join the serried rows of worshippers who, in company, sometimes in battalion face toward Mecca and follow the orisons and genuflections of the Imaum who stands before their centre Each man takes his place in the ranks, his hands hanging close by his sides Then he lifts them to his ears as if to shut out all worldly sounds Then he lays them on his knees, and bowing his head forward seems lost in contemplation After a few seconds he sinks to his knees, and leans back upon his heels, and then bowing with his forehead to the earth, exclaims, or rather chants, "Allah Akhbar" (God is great) Three times he thus bows and chants, and then he stands up, bowing forward, chanting three times "La Allah il Allah" (there is no God but God) The remainder of the somewhat tedious prayers which follow consists principally, as far as I can make out, of long verses of the "Koran"

In all his simple religious exercises the Turkish soldier is devoutness and attention itself, and it is perhaps most in privacy that this is most apparent I have frequently come unexpectedly upon some rugged soldier in one of the wild, lonely ravines that gash the hillsides around standing before the ragged overcoat which served him for a praying carpet, and going through his rather active religious motions with a zeal which would do credit to the most self conscious Pharisee The stranger who for the first time witnesses the united prayer of Turkish soldiers in camp is considerably puzzled by the selection of heterogeneous articles brought forward to the

place of worship, when the Muezzin's call has concluded. Religious custom requires that each man be provided with a praying carpet of one description or another, and that he take off his shoes as well. One man brings a jagged sheep-skin, another a goat-hide, a third the saddle-cloth of his horse, a fourth, mayhap, his jacket; every one has something or another on which he may kneel. To see some hundred men thus hurrying to the spot where the blue-robed, white-turbaned Imam stands, a stranger to their ways might be easily led to imagine them so many persons eager to dispose of superfluous garments, and taking advantage of the fortuitous presence of a dealer of Israelitish nationality.

The Russians, too, have been lately celebrating national festivals. On the 9th ult. we were startled by the thunder of cannon from Karajal, the fortified hill on which their right flank rests. The Marshal's long brass telescope was at once put in position, and every field-glass was directed against the frowning heights along which the heavy white smoke-clouds clung in the morning air. We looked in vain for the little secondary smoke-bursts that should have indicated exploding shells. In our advanced positions men ran to their arms and the parapets were black with eager, puzzled soldiers. It was only a salute of twenty-one guns in honour of the anniversary of the Czar's coronation. "May Allah destroy him," was the appropriate Moslem exclamation, when after due search in a Russian military calendar the cause of the salute was discovered and conveyed to the soldiery. Three or four days after another blank salute sent us again to our almanack. This time it was an Imperial birthday, that of the Emperor or Czarewitch, I forget which. Whichever it was, the object of the salute had the same Turkish good wishes as on the former occasion. Sometimes we have a light cavalry skirmish out in the plain, and on such occasions a good deal of artillery fire is apt to take place as the combatants come within range of the guns on either side. As a rule some five or six men are killed and twice as many wounded. Rarely does the affair go further.

Three days ago Said Bey, a nephew of the celebrated Schamyl, of Caucasian memory, got knocked over in one of these desultory fights. He lies in his tent shot through the breast. Dr. Casson, an English surgeon out here, tells me he has but little chance of life. Occasionally the monotony of camp life is stirred by the arrival of a deserter, usually a Pole or a Mahommedan Circassian, or a Tartar. The advent of one of these last has begun to cease to charm. At first their arrival was hailed as a sign of great things and a wholesale

desertion of the similar element in the opposing army

allies, and to receive with a certain amount of scepticism the wonderful and oft repeated stories of Russian discontent and demoralization they bring us

I have, however, met with a couple of genuine deserters, and that, too, of no inconsiderable rank. One is a Mohammedan Circassian, who, when the Servian war broke out, held the position of aide-de-camp to the Emperor of Russia. A staff officer in the camp here, and who had been for many years one of the Turkish military attachés at St Petersburg, told me he had there been intimate with this Circassian, who had on more than one occasion assured him that in case of war he would take the earliest opportunity of changing sides. He has kept his word, and I see him often in the tent of the état major, with his splendid uniform of the Russian Circassian Guard—a long tunic of fine white cloth, heavily laced with silver—his belt, sword sheath and hilt, as well as the various pouches and secondary articles such persons think fit to hang around their persons, of magnificently wrought and enamelled silver and gold. The second of these more notable deserters is a person of much greater importance. It is but a few days since he arrived at headquarters, where I saw him in the tent of Mukhtar Pacha. He is called Eeyoub Aga, and comes from the neighbourhood of Erivan. At home his rank is little short of princely. He commands the fighting men of 6 000 families. His brother was a cavalry divisional general in the Russian army, and was killed, or died (as Mukhtar Pacha told me in a significant manner), shortly before the defection of his brother. This Eeyoub Aga passed over to the Turks at Bayazid and thence came on here. He is a tall, gaunt man, with an expression of face very much reminding me of the late Tulu Moussa (bearded Moses), the Persian bandit chief, about whom I have had occasion to write some time since. As a reward for his change of side, Eeyoub Aga has been decorated by the Marshal with the Medjidie of a high class, and has had three other orders given him for his uncle and nephews.

The Polish deserters to the Turkish army are few and far between, notwithstanding the measures taken by their compatriots here to attract them. I dare say it is not generally known that a "Polish Legion" exists as a component part of the Turkish army of Armenia. We have one of forty men,

nineteen of whom are cavalry, the rest infantry. The history of the formation of this body, designed at its inception to be the nucleus of an imposing force, is curious enough. The men, principally residents in Constantinople, volunteered for the Army of the Danube. Among them was a considerable sprinkling of ex-Austrian and Russian officers, who undertook, by the distribution of Polish revolutionary proclamations, to cause the wholesale desertion of the Polish element in the regiments opposed to them, and subsequently to organize these deserters into a Turko-Polish Legion. For some inscrutable reason the Constantinople authorities decided on inducing this handful of adventurers to come here. They were told that immense numbers of prisoners had been taken, among them several thousand Poles, who were at Trebizond, awaiting officers to organize them. The forty Poles and their two officers at once abandoned the Danube mission and hurried away to Armenia. At Trebizond they were fêted by the inhabitants, and informed that the Polish prisoners and deserters were still at Baiburt. At Baiburt the future legion was believed to be at Erzeroum, and at Erzeroum the authorities had good reason to think that the mass of the prisoners were still at headquarters. Thus the gentlemen composing the unfortunate "nucleus" were led on step by step to the heart of Armenia, where they still remain.

Such is the tale as told to me by the two officers commanding the cavalry and infantry sections of the "nucleus," and confirmed by the statements of their men. They took part in the battles of the 18th and 25th of August, in the latter of which the infantry lost one man killed, and two wounded. Since their advent here they have been busy scattering lithographed revolutionary documents about the field in every locality where Russo-Polish troops might be apt to meet with them, the only fruit secured up to the present being two rather dilapidated-looking Poles, who would in any case probably have taken the first opportunity of coming over. Of course the whole story about the immense band of prisoners awaiting organization was a fable, not a single prisoner of any kind having been taken by the Turks up to that moment. Indeed, from the commencement of the campaign here up to to-day the entire number of prisoners would not exceed a dozen. The Polish nucleus is now on the point of breaking up. The men are dissatisfied with their food, and with their treatment generally. They declare they originally volunteered for the Danube, and only undertook to do exceptional "organizing duty" here during three months. The time has elapsed, and

they declare they will disband unless Government keeps to its original promises

What the next move of the contending armies on the frontier will be is hard to say. Neither party shows the least inclination to make a move—at least at the centre. But from either flank come rumours of proximate action. Mukhtar Pacha told me he was informed that the Russians were gradually sending off their heavy baggage from Ardahan, and it is a fact that their troops no longer occupy the town itself, confining themselves to the two commanding forts of Ymir Oghlou and Ramazan Oghlou, the capture of which at the commencement of the campaign secured for them the speedy possession of the place itself. Considerable Turkish forces, partly drawn from the Erzeroum garrison, are gradually drawing in that direction, and action of one kind or another seems probable.

The following letter is from the Correspondent in the Russian camp —

△ **CAMP KARAJAL, September 27th** — A more dismal place than that in which our headquarters are established cannot be easily imagined. Death itself must lose its horrors for people condemned to vegetate in such a spot, and so it is not difficult to explain why our officers and men long for a murderous battle, in the hope of getting away from this life wearying site. Instead of pondering here over the achievements which we should be able to accomplish if we had only 20,000 men and 100 cannon more, we ought to try our strength in turning and storming Mukhtar Pacha's position at once. Then we should have a chance of conquering good winter quarters in Erzeroum. There is obviously plenty of room for daring strategy. At all events it seems at the worst, to be less disadvantageous, and more honourable even, to recede before the Turks after having experienced a loss of some 3 000 men in a determined assault, than before the cold season, with perhaps double that loss. Moreover, defeat is unavoidable in the second case, whereas in the first, if our men have but pluck and our leaders ability, we have more chances of success than of discomfiture.

We are not so weak now as we were months ago, when General Heilmann dashed his head against the rocks of Zevin. Two complete divisions have reinforced us since. At first the 40th arrived, and now we have also the Moscow Grenadiers, the last battalions of which joined our army only three days ago. These new troops are composed of keen looking, well armed,

and well-accounted young men, who, provided they are skilfully conducted, and have not their courage wasted in pitiful skirmishing engagements, are certainly capable of turning the Turks out of any position accessible to human feet. Yesterday His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Michael paraded them and bade them welcome. He was highly satisfied with the inspection and had reason to congratulate their leaders as well as himself, for they are a body of first rate soldiers.

Everybody is now inclined to predict that a sharp stroke at Mukhtar Pacha's position is near at hand. The Pacha himself seems to be of a similar opinion. He was very busy on Monday about the Kizil Tepe entrenchments, examining them closely and ordering the construction of additional earthworks. I don't doubt that something has been planned here, but I am also led to suppose that nothing definitive has been fixed. As an excuse for the continual frittering away of time, it is alleged that the new chief of staff, General Gurtchine, of whose skill and energy great things are reported, is obliged to study the situation, and to review the links of the complicated chain with which our army is trying to fetter its opponent. What has been done during the course of this summer was little more than a groping in the dark with regard to the enemy's strength and resources, the final knowledge of which has been bought by bitter experience. It may be that the Bulgarian campaign is still absorbing the main interest and solicitude of the Russian Government. For all that it cannot be denied that a decisively victorious campaign here would bring the Russians more easily to Constantinople through Asia Minor than through the Danubian and Balkan stronghold. In Armenia, moreover, Russia has prospects of indemnifying herself for her enormous sacrifices in men and money; but she scorns the chance of acquiring substantial advantages in the hope of rehabilitating her military fame in the European theatre of war. We are thus confined to an otherwise incomprehensible inactivity. We are spellbound to the most objectionable place on earth. The fighting which has gone on has never had a very serious character. The losses sustained during the whole present campaign in dead and wounded do not amount to more than 5,000 men—that is to say, they are of less importance than those of a single day's battle before Plevna. Our soldiers have not been earnestly put to the test yet, although they enjoy the renown of being the very best in all Russia.

In the following letter, the same Correspondent with the

the task of closing in with the enemy's centre and main force, so as to prevent him from withdrawing his troops from Subatan, in order to reinforce other positions which we intended to take, if possible. To his right, the first division of the Moscow Grenadiers, at General Loris Melikoff's direct disposal, had to act against the Yagni hills. I believe I have stated already in my former letters that Great Yagni, situated about ten miles from our camp, is a very regular conical hill, with a plateau at the top, towering 750 feet over the plains and smooth undulations stretching from Kurukdere to Kars. A direct assault on that hill, which on former occasions had cost the Russians a good deal of blood, was now considered as likely to lead to no good result, and in consequence its capture did not enter into the original disposition.

The real and most important point, according to the views of our staff, against which all our efforts had to be concentrated, was Little Yagni, an entirely isolated, bulky elevation, with a comparatively extensive platform on the top. Though of considerably less height than its namesake, its sides are quite as steep, while a rocky crest, very much like that of the Kizil Tepe, borders its extended summit. This, however, does not consist of a uniform level, but is separated by an intervening flat depression, so as to form three distinct terraces, of which the southern one is about 200 feet higher than the northern. This hill, situated at a distance of about nine miles from Kars and two from the Great Yagni, completely stops the road from Kurukdere to that fortress. It is very probable that the information upon which it had not only been strongly fortified and garrisoned by Turkish infantry, but was also armed with twenty cannon of heavy calibre, was received from spies. The honour of taking by assault this commanding point was conferred upon the 2nd Brigade of the Moscow Grenadiers, under Major-General Count Grabbe, and eight battalions detached from Ardahan for that purpose, under General Komaroff. This gallant officer, who had been slightly wounded on the 25th of August, has since recovered. His fellow-sufferer, General Tshadtchewadze, wounded on the same day, had also reassumed his command of our whole cavalry. Three battalions, which, as a rule, garrison the fortress of Alexandropol, had also been ordered to Karajal, to cover the camp and headquarters, and to form the reserve of the 2nd Brigade of the 70th Division, which, as I have stated above, had nothing to do but to check an improbable offensive movement of the Turks against our left wing opposite the Kizil and the Yagni Tepes.

The general object apparently was to carry out a complete turn-

ing movement on both hostile wings, either to surround Mukhtar Pacha entirely or to cut off his communication with Kars. Could this have been effectually managed, no doubt he would have been compelled to surrender with his army within a few days, for, his supplies of ammunition and provisions being in danger of immediate exhaustion, he must either have broken through the Russian lines, or tried to make his way with disbanded troops across the Russian territory, in the hope of joining his comrade, Ismael Hakkı Pacha, who is still entrenched before Igdyr.

After this explanation, let me come to the events which I witnessed in following General Loris Melikoff's staff. The troops ordered for the advance started from their camps at eight o'clock in the evening of the 1st inst. At three o'clock precisely the next morning we followed, riding at a moderate speed, to the south-west on a country track over the vast plain. Our way was lit by the waning moon and countless stars shining with intense brilliancy. A cold wind made our trip by no means pleasant, as it brought the temperature near to the freezing-point. The staff consisted of about fifty persons—general officers, aides de camp, and servants—escorted by three sotnias of Cossacks from the Caucasus, not armed with lances, but accoutred and dressed like genuine Circassians. The ground, in appearance almost level, is in fact cut through at intervals by a few rocky ravines, between which lie long-stretching undulations rising gradually towards the south. After two hours and a half of wearisome riding, we arrived at dawn of day at an eminence some 150 feet above the flat-topped ridge of the rising ground called the Kaback Tepe (Pumpkin Hill).

Hitherto no reports of firearms had reached us. But from the top of this commanding point, at half-past five, sharp and general firing suddenly struck our ear. To our right and left the roar of the cannons, and the sharp, dry, knocking, rattling of the musketry came down, sounding in the distance like the noise produced by the work of some hundred road-makers, breaking flint-stones in a re-echoing hall. The principal object of attack, the Little Yagm, rising now clear in sight, frowned over the plains of Kars like an impregnable fortress. Its summit was surrounded with breastworks, ditches, rifle-pits, and blinded batteries. The Moscow Grenadiers and the Ardahan Division were already supposed to be at work. I say supposed, because in fact they were not. On seeing from the Kaback Tepe some forty guns firing with a range of three miles, at earthworks which were prudently left empty by the Turks, it seemed to me that the attack lacked the character

which was likely to secure victory. Had the infantry been led immediately to the assault in tirailleur lines before the dawn of day, without firing a single round they would have carried that hill, I am sure, within half an hour. In the way the attack was conducted it was obvious that the enemy, who, judging by the number of his tents, had there about 3,000 men, had time to bring all his available means to the defences.

I have not the slightest doubt that the twelve hours' cannonading did no harm whatever to the earthworks, and inflicted only trifling losses on the garrison, for they had for the most part retired to the sides of the hill that were out of range. To our left, the impetuous General Heimann had already hurled his division in skirmishing lines against the Aladjá mountain, and its southern continuation, the Awly-yer hill, separated from it by the upper part of the Subatan ravine. The incessant sharp volleys gave evidence that the Turkish main force had been concentrated there. It was soon clear also that a direct assault on those rocky steeps and terraces, strengthened by numerous entrenchments and stone barricades, had no better chance of succeeding to-day than on previous occasions. Within the first half an hour it was clear that the carefully elaborated plan of operations again combined all the faults of previous tactics, magnified, moreover, by the absence of that dash which, at the beginning of the present campaign, was characteristic of this army.

Some one seems to have suggested, and brought others to believe, that in this breech-loading time an assault by infantry is obsolete and unnecessary, and that all war might, with less effusion of blood, be just as well, or better, done by the artillery alone. Such, unhappily, seems to be the erroneous idea at headquarters. Yet, of all the shells which I have had the opportunity of watching here, fired on our own or on the Turkish side, not a single one caused damage worth the pains and the powder. When they burst in the earth it was at such a depth that their weak charges were unable to overcome its resistance, and, consequently, the fragments did not fly off. They only exploded properly when the shell happened to strike on a rock or other hard substance. I have not even heard that a single one of our soldiers has been killed by the famous shrapnels, which, at all events, are much more efficacious than simple grenades. At ridiculous distances of above three miles they, too, are likely to produce little more than an innocent shower of leaden drops. Anyhow, artillery alone is not capable of dislodging such stubborn soldiers

as the Turks are from the bottom of their deep rifle pits. Further discussion on the subject would be preposterous in the face of a series of experiments which are everywhere conclusive in favour of my assertion.

Our cannon still boomed at the rocks and the earth while masses of infantry were either idling as reserves in the depressions of the ground or were employed in a disastrous but useless skirmishing with the enemy. For hours each tirailleur lay behind a heap of stones which he had previously piled up for his shelter and took a deliberate aim at some similarly protected adversary. Such fighting only kills and wounds, without the hope of a useful result. At six o'clock in the morning this state of things was on both wings as clear as the rising sun whose rays gilded the glorious white crown of Mount Ararat. In the centre before us stood three miles off cutting the blue sky with its regular conical profile Great Yagui. It covered the front of Mukhtar Pasha's centre and left wing commanding the plain before them and enjoyed the reputation of impregnability since at different times various Russian assaults on its steep slopes had been repulsed with considerable loss. From its foot to its top it was covered with rifle pits and ditches in three superposed rows cut in conformity with the configuration of the ground in projecting and re-entering angles.

The prospects of success there appeared indeed so very poor that it was considered by the Russian staff useless to attempt the conquest of that natural fortress. Therefore only a demonstration supported by a brigade and two batteries was intended.

From its base and its middle were not manned at all and even the fortifications bordering the top plateau were only very insufficiently armed as was proved by the spasmodic and unconnected rifle firing and the apparent absence of cannon. On learning this General Loris Melikoff ordered a general assault on the hill. From three sides the troops advanced merrily in skirmishing lines with supports and reserves cheering as they passed their commanding General who spoke to them some encouraging words. The cannons redoubling their firing flung shrapnel after shrapnel to the top. An hour afterwards the whole hill was swarming with grenadiers who steadily climbed up its steep slopes despite the frantic firing of its defenders. At eight o'clock the Turkish battalion on the summit of the Great Yagui had ceased to exist. Our men

had entirely occupied the impregnable hill, and were waving joyously their caps and muskets.

While this was being accomplished, the indifferent cannonading on the right, between our batteries and those on the Little Yagni, was still going on. It might have continued for a century, and nothing would have come of it. As soon as it became evident that the men on the top of Great Yagni were genuine Russians and not Turks, as some of us still supposed, the staff rode off in order to inspect the conquered position, and to decide the further course of operations now possible through so brilliant a beginning. The hill was rather too steep for our horses, and we rode round it to the right, over the plain two miles wide which separates it from Little Yagni. What in the world had we to do with that Little Yagni? Had it been blocked up after the defeat of Mukhtar Pacha's main army, its defenders must have surrendered within three days from want of water. The opinions on that point were unanimous among all the officers. The task of shutting in the garrison of Kars—at the utmost 6,000 men—ought to have been entrusted to a single brigade, which might have occupied and fortified the heights contiguous to Great Yagni, and opposite to Little Yagni. When our staff passed by, one of our infantry regiments had already been deployed in skirmishing order, and was engaged with that garrison. Besides, strong bodies of our numerous cavalry, commanding that plain, challenged in vain the Turkish irregular horsemen. All their ferocious Circassians, disgusted on account of their receiving neither pay nor food, had left Mukhtar's camp in a wholesale desertion a fortnight ago. Only worthless, cowardly Kurds remained for the sake of murder and plundering.

All of a sudden the Turkish heavy battery on the top of Little Yagni changed its mark. Cutting the air with portentous howling, a well-aimed shell struck in the very midst of the squad of Cossacks forming our vanguard, throwing the earth high up. A horse with empty saddle sprang about bewildered, but his stunned rider, recovering his senses, caught him, quickly mounted, and joined his troop at a gallop. Old General Loris Melikoff, keeping his horse in the same steady pace as before, did not seem to care for such trifles as shells and the stray rifle-bullets humming around us. Taking the lead of his staff, with his green Mohammedan standard embroidered with red inscriptions in Arabic letters flying before him, he gave an example of cold-blooded courage to his officers. Almost immediately a shell whizzed by and struck the ground, bursting some twenty yards behind our party.

Then came another and another, all passing over us, till at last one fell only five yards off the very centre of our crowd. The officers huddling together nevertheless received the noisy failure with a scornful hurrah.

A few seconds more and another big shell burst right amidst our staff, perhaps only one yard behind General Louis Melikoff's horse. Earth and small stones flew about. In an instant as the foremost part of the crowd disappeared in the dust I thought the commanding General killed. He, however, rode quietly on and smiled, as a somewhat fainter hurrah accompanied the bursting of the iron monster. It had grazed the right side of Lieutenant Petroff's face, and the pressure of the air made him deaf on that side. His cheek became swollen and severe headache ensued. This was the only accident we had to complain of. No other officer was wounded or contused. Some of the horses however were scratched or bruised a little by the earth and the pebbles. The shell itself produced no effect in the middle of such a crowd of horsemen, and the fragments found their grave on the spot where they intended to dig ours. A few minutes afterwards we were out of dangerous range.

As we wheeled round into the valley, 400 yards wide, which separates Great Yagm from the bulk of the Aladja Mountain two regiments of cavalry dashed at full speed into the plain where the Turkish battalions from Kars were engaged with our skirmishers. Of course I expected that they would sweep like an avalanche over that dry level ground and cut down in a gallant charge the enemy's scattered soldiers. As far as I could see no such thing happened. The cautious warriors when the bullets began to tell on them lost much of their pluck and placing their confidence rather in their muskets than their broadswords indulged in a skirmishing entertainment. Afterwards I heard of their achievements and how they had slain hundreds of Nizams and Bashî Bazouks but I had not the good fortune to see this feat of arms. Presently, four Red Cross men carried a man on a litter to the ambulance in the rear. We went up to the patient and discovered that he was not as we thought, a Russian but a wounded Turk. All our soldiers are well acquainted with the fact that the Turks kill torture and mutilate every Russian prisoner, yet they cannot murder in stupid fanatic hatred, a helpless suffering wretch, although the inexorable law of retaliation seems to demand it. All the Turkish prisoners, some 140—wounded and unwounded—were kindly treated and well attended to in my presence. At the time when we had reached about the middle of the

valley, from which a road, cut in zigzags, leads to the summit of Great Yagni. Victory turned her smiling face towards the Russian commander, but he disdained the opportunity, and listened to General Heimann's opinion.

Opposite Great Yagni runs a high barren ridge, sloping gradually upward to a flat-topped summit called the Awly-Yer, which is severed from the Aladja Mountain by the Subatan ravine, about two miles above the village of Hadji Veli Koi. This commanding point—the most important of the whole Turkish position, and subsequently well fortified—was literally inaccessible from the plain at the foot of the Aladja, towards which it falls off some 1,500 feet in a succession of steep gradients and perpendicular rocks. At its base the Turks had concentrated their main force; and Mukhtar, relying on the strength of Great Yagni, had neglected to occupy with the necessary troops the summit of the Awly-Yer. This fact had been ascertained by our cavalry patrols. Two squadrons of Cossacks had even remained for two hours at Veli Koi, a village situated to the south of that elevation, right across Mukhtar's only line of retreat, where they met not a single Turkish soldier. The Pacha, moreover, was utterly unable to send a sufficient force quickly enough to the Awly-Yer, because he was closely pressed in front by the 2nd Brigade of the Caucasian Grenadiers, under Major-General von Schack, a Prussian by birth and education. Six of our battalions had just descended the Great Yagni, six others were near at hand, and had they been momentarily withdrawn from the superfluous attack on the Little Yagni, it is probable that they would have taken the Awly-Yer almost without loss from the side of its totally unoccupied southern ridge. Possibly such movements did not enter the original plan; but plans are worthless when the fighting has once begun, and all depends on the capacity to seize favourable opportunity.

It seems that General Loris Melikoff asked an officer whether he knew the road to Vezin Koi. The Awly-Yer was obviously the only tactical object worth storming at any cost; it was the magic point from which the fate of the day was suspended by a thread. Its occupation by the Russians would have unavoidably led to the destruction of Mukhtar Pacha's entire army. Its very key, the Great Yagni, was already in our hands. At this moment, unhappily, General Heimann, in an interview with Loris Melikoff, was pleased to assert formally that his troops, advancing from the Subatan plain, were quite able to finish taking the Awly-Yer, as they had done with the Great Yagni, and that, therefore, our available force

might be advantageously employed against the Little Yagm and the garrison of Kars. This strange opinion prevailed. General Loris Melikoff's genius was impaired by pernicious advice. His whole staff recognized it, but nobody ventured to utter an objection. General Heimann, of course, did not take the Awly Yer as he had promised in his sanguine fashion but was, on the contrary, repulsed with considerable loss, while the three brigades ordered to assail the Little Yagm had no better chance. Even had we had a reserve of 50 000 men more they too would never have succeeded in the attempt of taking those fortifications and works by assaulting them. This was conspicuous enough at nine o'clock in the morning and the wisest plan would have been then to withdraw the troops for the opportunity had been missed.

The staff turned its back to the Awly-Yer, and followed the zigzags of the road which the Turks had recently made for the convenience of the garrison on the summit of the Great Yagm. Company after company as they passed us descending, cheered the commanding General who wished them good luck. On the hillside as we went up by a young grenadier, moaning as he tried to lift his head and rest on his elbow to answer the questions and receive the consolations of the General. Overcome however by weakness and pain he fell back and shut his eyes while the blood still gushed from the wound in his side. Higher up a dead Turk, stretched across the narrow track on his face compelled us to make a circuit. On reaching at last the level top of Great Yagm a ghastly sight struck our eyes. All the pits and ditches around were filled with the corpses of Turks. The dead were almost all shot through the head because the remaining parts of their bodies had been sheltered by the parapets. Here they lay as they fell, on their backs or faces side by side or one above the other. A negro with grinning teeth hung right across a white soldier, and his long arms stretched out over the rocky abyss. Some preserved the ferocious expression which they had borne when still alive and lay with clenched fists and distorted limbs. Others calm and quiet looked like stone. In a pit, opposite each other, sat two softas. Though in the uniform of soldiers they were easily recognized as religious students by the white muslin band tied around their fezzes. One had his skull laid open by a shell fragment the other was shot through the temple. Both had obviously been killed by the same shrapnel. Some hundred dead bodies encumbered the trenches, others lay strewn over the hillside.

When we came to the top the Russians had already buried their own killed and had removed all the wounded and

prisoners. About 140 Turks had been taken alive. We learnt from a soldier that the famous Kara Fatima, the Turkish heroine, had met with a fatal end. They said that she lay in one of the captured tents, shot through the heart. Together with an officer I sought her all over the hill, but I did not find her; but some asserted that, on the persistent entreaty of the Turkish prisoners, she had been buried immediately by compassionate Russian soldiers. The number of tents on the hill justified the supposition that it had only been defended by about 450 men. Two Turkish officers were among the dead. One stood still upright in the trenches, leaning over the breastwork, with his right arm stretched out as if in the action of firing a revolver. The other, a stout, obese fellow, lay on his back before his own tent. He had been killed before he had time to get on his coat, which he had slung over his huge shoulders.

We had a magnificent look-out from the Great Yagni over the whole field of battle. Kars, a grey heap of stones, uninviting like the remainder of this melancholy country, rose in sight. From one of its northern detached works—I believe Fort Mouchlis—a monster cannon thundered at intervals, sending its shots in the direction of the Little Yagni. The troops were still wasting their forces against well-armed natural strongholds, when it would have been a comparatively easy thing to cut the army off from their supplies. I cannot account for the persistence with which our General always engages the enemy's whole front line, with the result that we are everywhere too weak, and have nowhere strong reserves at hand which alone are likely to secure victory at the favourable moment. So the battle, very similar to previous ones which had been fought on the same ground, was protracted from hour to hour to no purpose. It was the accustomed style of tirailleur engagements at respectable distances, without moving, accompanied by the annoying but harmless noise of 200 cannon. We descended the Great Yagni on the opposite side, resting at an eminence at its foot. As I knew beforehand that nothing would come of our supreme efforts, because the same causes must necessarily bring about the same results, the same faults the same failures, I did not wonder when General Heimann asked for reinforcements, while the Little Yagni blunder neutralized about 16,000 men. At last, in the afternoon, the smoke of cannons was seen on the ridge of the Aladja Dagh itself. It came from General Sholkownikoff's brigade, which had thus succeeded in threatening the rear of Mukhtar Pacha's camp near Subatan; and, in the case of his discomfiture, was ready to prevent his

escape across that mountain Mukhtar's very existence was threatened by this dangerous turning movement. As he, however, does not lack experience with regard to unexpected surprises in the mountains, to which he had been accustomed during his prolonged struggle with the Montenegrins, he was able to parry the stroke with remarkable skill and success. It may be, too, that he knew, through the instrumentality of his spies the whole Russian plan. Only so can it be explained that he paid little attention to the important Great Yagni position, while he covered the Little Yagni with men and guns in profusion. As he was also well acquainted with the fact that General Sholkownikoff's movement had no serious purport, and was meant to be a mere demonstration, he not only took no heed of it, but planned a counter action which was likely to compel a less circumspect adversary to surrender. As it was, however, General Sholkownikoff retired without losing a prisoner.

The day came to an end, and with it the battle. Weary after a sleepless night, the members of the staff sat down and talked together, or endeavoured to slumber a little with the earth as a mattress and the rocks as pillows. We had nothing to eat and drink, but nobody was very hungry, because of the fatigue and nervous excitement. Waiting for a result, but despairing of success, we were longing for an end, when, on a sudden, a well known howl broke the air above us. A second afterwards, a smash and crack amidst our browsing horses and yawning Cossacks announced that we were within range of the enemy's guns. A few minutes elapsed, and there was another howl and another smash and burst. These shots came from the invisible summit of the Little Yagni at least four miles off. Everybody thought it wise to retreat from so inhospitable a spot. The whole army was ordered to bivouac that night on the positions which had been conquered or occupied during the day, in order to renew the battle on the following morning. Not admiring this plan I left the staff, and made my way back to the Karajal camp. The poor staff officers a polite and interesting body of princes, counts, barons, generals and colonels made themselves as comfortable as possible in the cold air on the hard, stony ground, without shelter, water and fuel. Moreover, the poor horses had not been watered for the last twenty four hours. There is not a drop of water to be found for ten miles around Great Yagni with the exception of the Subatan streamlet still in Mukhtar's grasp.

General Loris Melikoff sent two battalions as a garrison to Great Yagni ordering them and the sappers to strengthen

the entrenchments with additional earthworks. In case of need, two divisions were near at hand to support the troops on its summit. I could not but suppose that, despite all hindrances, the Russians would keep their dearly bought conquest at any cost. The water question was a very serious one indeed, especially as the road on the other side was exposed to the Turkish firing. Still we had plenty of beasts of burden, including thousands of camels, especially fitted for this sort of transport. On the following morning, the 3rd instant, I rode to the Karajal observatory, to examine the battle-field of the previous day on our left wing, which I had not seen yet. There the Grand Duke, his son, and his brilliant staff, with the field-telegraph office at their immediate disposal, had been waiting some hours. Hitherto nothing remarkable had occurred. The outposts of the 40th Division, under General Lazareff's able command, had had a little indifferent skirmishing at the Kizil Tepe.

At half-past two o'clock, p.m., I saw through my field-glass three strong lines of Turkish tirailleurs, one behind the other, advancing, rifles in hand, at a quick pace. They occupied a front of at least three miles in length, were preceded by two batteries, and followed by compact supports and reserves, all arranged in perfect order. The whole force must have consisted of about 15,000 men, having their right wing covered by the Kizil Tepe. It was obviously their intention to make a desperate attack on the Karajal camp, and they seem to have supposed that the whole Russian forces had been brought over to our right wing. They were the more led to believe this as on the previous day no signs of troops had been shown here. General Lazareff, with the 40th Division, backed by a regiment of the garrison of Alexandropol and numerous horsemen, lay in ambush for them during the course of that day. The Russians were quite prepared to receive the assaulting foe. Their soldiers lay in rows concealed in the folds of the ground, or behind pyramidal heaps of loose stones. Ostensibly, only two battalions and a battery, together with some cavalry, leaving the Karajal position, marched to the fight. The Turks, encouraged by this apparent weakness, hastened their steps. Their batteries galloped ahead, and opened a brisk shell-fire on those of the Russians, who replied steadily with only eight guns. At the same time, the Kizil Tepe flung shell after shell at all moving objects on the field—ammunition carts, Red Cross waggons, cavalry, herds, and labourers—fortunately without hurting anything but the soil. The skirmishers, too, rattled away while the Turkish infantry drew nearer and nearer, without

firing a round. They dived down into the ravines and reappeared, always resolutely advancing against the Russian cannons, which had in the meanwhile been reinforced by another battery of eight pieces. Although both were exposed to the bullets, they made no preparations for limbering up, but continued their slow firing. The Turkish batteries were soon silenced by the advance of their own men, who masked them.

Then at last the enemy saw the sunbeams dancing on the levelled rifle barrels peeping behind stones and sods. Now, at once, he began firing with frantic rapidity, but did not slacken his moving ahead. Only stray shots from sharpshooters answered the challenge. Finally, however, the Russians lost their temper, and, returning the fire volley for volley, showed a line of battle of no less extent and power than that of their adversaries. Then they rose together and faced the shower of lead, advancing and firing, firing and advancing, line after line, running from cover to cover, but always moving ahead, right down on the enemy. Every soldier seemed to believe that the Grand Duke's eyes were especially fixed on him. It was refreshing to see how this division, in contrast with the monotonous unproductive skirmishing of their comrades on the previous day, went on without a moment's hesitation, with admirable and matchless courage. The Turks became demoralized by this unexpected resistance, supported by forces quite equal to theirs. Their advance was checked, and came to a standstill. Soon they retrograded slowly, but always firing. It was of no avail. They were driven back irresistibly from undulation to undulation, till at last they turned their backs and ran, seeking shelter behind their pits and breastworks. But again and again the Russians followed and dislodged them at a rush with the bayonet, compelling them to recede, either step by step or in short runs. The Turks became, from minute to minute, more disheartened. Soon they had had enough of the game, and shortly after nightfall were in precipitous flight towards their fortified camp around Subatan, at the foot of the Aladja Dagh. General Lazareff pursued them fast, even through the dark. His lanterns were the incessant sparkling of the long line of firing rifles, and the occasional broad flash of the cannons. When he had lost sight and feeling of the frightened enemy in that pitch dark night, the firing died gradually out, and the slaughter came to an end.

The Turks, completely routed, took refuge behind their entrenchments, while the Russians, after having thrown up breastworks and pits, passed the night on the ground they had so gallantly conquered. Their losses were severe. The 40th

Division had nearly 700 killed and wounded in this three hours' fighting, whereas the Turks had left about 400 dead on that part of the field which the Russians chose to occupy. I was at a loss to understand why General Heimann, who commanded to the right of General Lazareff, did not assist him. Two regiments of cavalry could have outflanked and annihilated the scattered enemy at the proper moment. Be this as it may, I have not yet witnessed here a more judiciously combined and a more brilliantly conducted affair than that of the afternoon of the 3rd instant. It was carried on in the true military style. Careful plans and brave troops concurred in bringing it to a very satisfactory result. It is to be regretted that the time was too short for a full display of the General's abilities and his soldier's courage, as otherwise I do not doubt the camp at Subatan and the Kizil Tepe would both have been taken. On both sides there was no interminable, never-progressing cannonading, no timid skirmishing. The guns did not fire a minute longer than was necessary to introduce the action, and the tirailleurs, with most laudable pluck, were eager to settle the question of victory or defeat at once. Every single man had visibly made up his mind either to die or to conquer.

General Lazareff must be proclaimed the hero of the battle, and the Grand Duke was highly gratified with this striking proof of his ability. For the 4th a general renewed assault on the Little Yagni was announced. This seemed incredible after the bitter experiments on the 2nd. Luckily the rumour has not been confirmed by events. As the staff had not returned yet, I presumed that something important was in view. I at first intended to ride directly to the foot of the Great Yagni, but learned that our headquarters had been transferred to the Kaback Tepe. Everybody in the camp laboured under the belief that the Great Yagni had, once for all, remained in the possession of the Russian troops, and that the line of communication of the Turkish Army with Kars had been efficaciously interrupted. My astonishment was, therefore, equal to my disappointment on being informed at the Kaback Tepe bivouac that the Great Yagni hill and all the surrounding valuable positions, which the Russians had conquered on the 2nd with so considerable an effusion of blood, had been finally given up on the plea that it was difficult, if not impossible, to provide the troops and animals there with water. It is true that both had undergone, during the last two days, extreme hardships and privations. On the other hand, however, it would be difficult to deny that the inconvenience might have been mitigated easily enough, as thou-

ands of carriages and beasts of burden camels and others, in the Commissariat Service, are at the General's disposal. The Turks moreover, had made, two months since the necessary arrangement for the proper sustenance of their garrison on the summit of the Great Yagui. What they had managed to overcome the Russians might have overcome too. I don't know why the system of digging Abyssinian wells has never been tried in this barren country, where water must be found at a certain depth. The rich cold springs spouting out of the Kurukdere ravine indicate the presence of large supplies, filtered down from the high mountains all around. The question anyhow, is worth an attempt.

At the Kaback Tepe a little shelling and skirmishing was going on without visible effect. Mukhtar Pachá stood triumphantly with his staff on the top of the Great Yagui, which he was allowed to occupy without spending a single drop of his soldiers' blood. He has, after a narrow escape, due only to

be made on the Turks whether it will be more wisely planned and conducted than the previous ones, and arrive at any substantial result nobody can tell yet. Bad weather has now set in, the troops have been withdrawn to their former quarters, with the exception of General Count Grabbe's brigade, which is still waiting on the Kaback Tepe for further orders. I believe that something grand is projected and then only it will be decided whether the actual campaign will come to a premature conclusion or not. Should however, the previous very conspicuous faults be repeated, I cannot anticipate much glory and success.

the enemy's weak point. Two such points were discovered in the course of the late battle. Vezinkoi and the rear of the Aladja position, where General Skolkownikoff operated. Both advantages if followed up would have led, no doubt, to an entire victory. Where was the *coup d'œil*? Where were the reserves? Why was the pluck shown on the next day by General Lazareff only? No concentrated action of artillery, no sweeping dash of the cavalry on the broad plain and for all that, heavy losses. We had according to the latest accounts, 3,360 men *hors de combat*, among them 960 killed and 2,400 wounded. We lost only two prisoners. Fifty-four

officers were wounded, a small and insignificant proportion compared with the loss of men as the result of other engagements. One colonel of the artillery has been killed. Whether other officers were killed and how many, I have not ascertained yet. Spies and deserters, whose accounts, however, are subject to suspicion because they want to procure a flattering reception for themselves, declare the losses of the Turks to amount to about 8,000 men. Two hundred and forty of their prisoners are in our hands. Reinforcements are again demanded, but only locally.

The experience of the fighting on the 2nd and 3rd of October was not, however, lost. It was resolved by General Melikoff to attack the Awly-Yer (the Acolias Hill of the Russians, the Exliatépisse of the Turkish despatches, and the Olya Tepe of many maps), indicated in the preceding letter of our Correspondent as the real key to the Turkish position, and to prepare for that operation by sending General Lazareff to the rear of Mukhtar Pacha's left. With this object General Lazareff accomplished a march of forty miles by the ruins of Ani, until he had reached the heights of Orlok, thus out-flanking the Turks. On the 14th of October General Lazareff attacked the Turkish left in the rear, compelling it to fall back in the direction of Kars and Vezinkoi. This done, it was decided on the next day to assail in front the positions of Ahmed Mukhtar Pacha, of which the fortified hill of Acolias formed the key. After preparing the way by a well-directed cannonade, the Russians advanced to the assault. In the afternoon General Heimann, with three regiments and a battalion of riflemen, made a brilliant attack upon Mount Acolias, which he succeeded in carrying. By the Russian occupation of this position, Ahmed Mukhtar Pacha's army was cut in two. That part of his army which retreated in the direction of Kars was attacked by the troops under General Lazareff and subsequently pursued by General Heimann. Towards five o'clock in the afternoon the whole Turkish Army was completely defeated, leaving an enormous number of killed, seven thousand prisoners, and four guns. The three Turkish divisions forming the Turkish right wing were entirely surrounded and driven out of their positions on the Aladja Dagh with great loss, and at eight o'clock in the evening were com-

pelled to surrender. Thirty-two guns and an immense quantity of war material were captured. Ahmed Mukhtar fled to Kars.

The following letter from the Correspondent at the Russian headquarters describes the preparations for the battle of the 15th of October. —

△ CAVAL KAPAJAL, October 13th — Since the 2nd instant continuous fighting has been going on here. After the sanguinary engagement at Subutan on the 3rd, however, the encounters have not been of a serious character, and are, on either side, mere demonstrations intended to draw the enemy's attention from the real object of operations. In opposition to our former inactivity during the best part of the season, due chiefly to the insufficient number of troops, a busy military spirit now prevails in our army, and judicious combinations are on the point of being carried into effect with the view of outwitting Mukhtar Pacha, though it certainly must be admitted that he is not the man to be circumvented by ordinary means especially while he sticks with unshaken tenacity to his stronghold on the rocks. Still one crushing power is brought forth against him which to counterbalance is a difficult task even for a

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patience peculiar to their enthralled populations to the point of breaking it. The Circassians unable to find anything worth plundering in the locality with which to sustain themselves and their horses, constrained by hunger, have long ago left the camp in crowd. The mustafiz and redifs most of them men who were the only support of their families have either openly done the same or else have been driven to it. The plea of
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is proved that, a reckless system of compelling the army to provide for its wants at the expense of the country where it is quartered should be continued. It is easy to foresee that their resistance must very soon crumble to pieces. Still the Russian Commander in Chief is not at all willing to leave things as they are and to entrust to fate or General Winter the reduction of the Turkish forces. Although the attack on the 3rd instant may be called in a certain sense a failure inasmuch as the routing and dislodging of Mukhtar Pacha

did not directly follow, as had been confidently hoped by our leading strategists, yet that battle and the following series of engagements have led to a state of things synonymous with victory.

The total losses of Mukhtar Pacha are estimated by spies at above 8,000 men, owing particularly to the several desperate assaults on General Sholkownikoff's brigade, which had occupied the summit of Mount Aladja, in the rear of his very headquarters, and to the discomfiture inflicted on him by General Lazareff before Subatan on the 3rd. During the night between the 9th and 10th instant the Mushir secretly withdrew from his fortified advanced position in the plain, together with the Kizil Tepe and Great Yagni hills, and retired to his former entrenched encampments, half way up the Aladja. It may be that the turning movement which the dashing General Lazareff, with twenty-six battalions, forty-eight field-pieces, and six regiments of cavalry, is directing from the south-east on Mukhtar's line of communication with Kars, and eventually Erzeroum, has induced him to concentrate his scattered and diminished troops. On the other hand, it can hardly be supposed that he had been fully informed by his spies, never paid as they are, of that hazardous, but certainly very daring and efficient operation, on the date of his retreat, when it was in its very beginning, and even if he knew of it he may have considered it as a mere cavalry raid.

The startling fact that a field-telegraph line has been established without interruption from the Karajal headquarters to General Lazareff's division, following him all along his circuitous march of at least forty miles through a mountainous, hostile country, completely in the rear of the actual Turkish position, gives ample proof of the fact that the Pacha is ignorant of that double-edged move on this great chessboard. The telegraphic communication was indeed once interrupted, and much anxiety was felt about it, but within two hours it was re-established. The wind, and not malicious Turks, had thrown down some of the poles. This inference seems correct, therefore, that the Pacha's hasty retreat was rather prompted by the comparatively enormous losses he had sustained, either from the relentless fighting during the week previous to his withdrawal, or from wholesale desertions, than by General Lazareff's intrepid interposition. Had his valuable Circassian scouts not disappeared, driven away in despair and disgust, they would have assuredly succeeded in fathoming the Russian design, or at least in destroying the telegraph line, which now enables a simultaneous movement of our two columns to be carried out, the

object of which is to envelop Mukhtar Pacha and compel him either to stay on his barren cold summits or to surrender. Should General Lazareff, whose whereabouts is still kept secret, be directed to attack and occupy the Orlok summit and Vezinkoi, while we assail the same points from this side of the mountains, victory is probable, and Mukhtar Pacha will then have to fight for his existence. If, on the contrary, these operations should turn out to be only a sort of affected strategy, without being followed by a tactical decisive stroke, nothing can come out of it but a retreat in the mud when the impending bad weather sets in here.

I hope that this time General Lazareff's movements will not be arrested or impaired by half-measure instructions, which render success impossible. Should the Mushir, despite his circumspection and general sharp-sightedness, be caught in the meshes of the extensive strategic network thrown around him, the siege of Kars and the loss of Armenia might be the consequence. At all events, the Pacha's prospects are bad—worse indeed than they have ever been before. The task of extricating himself out of his internal and external difficulties, without yielding his ground, is worthy of the highest military talent and if successfully accomplished would be a title to glory for him. I have, however, full faith in General Lazareff's ability, courage and resources.

The Kizil Tepe on the conquest of which Mukhtar Pacha on the 25th of August, based a claim of victory, is now again in Russian hands. The entrenchments there are all of very neat and careful workmanship and prove the peculiar aptitude of the Turks or their advisers, for this branch of warfare. Their guns—withdrawn of course before the surrender—had all been placed in deep cuttings and covered in with double crossed rows of strong timber, with a thick bed of earth on the top. How the Russian artillery could dream of dismantling such blindages and dismounting the guns by firing at them from their favourite distance of three or four miles one is at a loss to understand. The Russian staff, it seems, has come at last to a better knowledge of the tactical importance of the Great Yagui, and is now determined to keep it. Since the day before yesterday a redoubt has been erected at its foot opposite the Aulu Yer summit, and has been armed with cannon of heavy calibre for the purpose of bombarding the enemy's camps night and day. I hear them firing now. Mukhtar Pacha, deeply disappointed at the constant progress of the Russian earthworks, which proves on the Grand Duke's part a firm resolution to maintain his hold there, had recourse to a

desperate assault. Before daybreak this morning he marched out six battalions of volunteers, supported by reserves and artillery, and hurled them against the Great Yagni. This brigade stealthily advanced towards the new redoubt, and would have surprised and taken it but for an accident. The Russians, inconceivably careless as they sometimes are, had not only neglected their outpost service, but had not even a squad of Cossacks at hand for scouting and other useful purposes. But, fortunately for them, at the very moment of the Turkish attack, two other battalions arrived which had been told off to relieve those on working duty. So three battalions instead of one were able to act. Posted partly behind the entrenchments, they received the assailants with a well-aimed, quick fire, and compelled them, after an hour's fighting, to retire in disorder, charging them with the bayonet. General von Schack states that, had he had at his disposal a regiment of cavalry, he would have annihilated them to the last man. The Russian losses amount to only twenty-four men killed and wounded. The Turks left 123 corpses on the field, and may, in consequence, be estimated to have lost some 400 men. Such engagements and tactical movements are only the prelude to what is expected to take place when General Lazareff shall have reached his destination, the Orlok summits or Vezinkoi. Then we hope the question of our invading or not invading Armenia will be definitely settled. His horses are much fatigued by their long and difficult journey across those mountains, and it is on these grounds that he is advancing slowly. To-morrow, or the day after to-morrow, however, we confidently expect a result. Whether it will involve a great decisive battle, or will lead only to a series of minor engagements, or to Mukhtar's retreat without his accepting the challenge, will soon be decided.

P.S.—I have just spoken to one of the Turkish wounded prisoners, a captain, aged about 45, who was taken this morning before the Great Yagni Hill. His name is Osman, and he is a native of Adrianople, which place he left six years ago. He was struck on the thigh by a fragment of stone, and suffered at first great pain. Now he feels a good deal better, owing to the excellent medical treatment and the careful attendance he is enjoying. As I know Adrianople well, I had no difficulty in getting into his confidence. His statement is as follows:—The Mushir had for a time made up his mind to remain where he was around Subatan during the coming winter, and had ordered for that purpose the erection of earth huts for the troops, which were being built.

On seeing, however, the fast increasing number of Russians threatening his flanks and rear, he thought it advisable to concentrate his forces by retiring to the summits of the Aladja, and abandoning all his advanced positions in the plain. Mukhtar is well aware of General Lazareff's turning movement, and has detached to meet him the Ferik (Lieutenant-General) Selim Pacha, with fifteen battalions, who is now occupied in fortifying the Orlok Mountain and Vezinkoi. The Pacha's decision as to his eventual retreat to Kars will depend upon the issue of the expected battle. The Turkish lieutenant-colonel commanding the column of attack to-day has likewise been wounded, but was carried out of the turmoil by some of his soldiers.

The following is a description by the same Correspondent of the great Battle of Aladja Dag, which at length decisively and irrevocably determined the character of the campaign in Armenia. It is followed by another account of the same battle by the Special Correspondent with the Turks.

△ CAMP KARAJAL, *October 17th.*—Mukhtar Pacha's army has ceased to exist. I can state this truth on personal knowledge of the operations by which the dissolution of the Turkish force has been accomplished before my own eyes. The Ottoman General, who had proudly kept his position for months on the almost inaccessible mountains and hills opposite Kurukdere, has been shattered against his own rocks.

I stated in my last letter from Karajal that General Lazareff, at the head of 27 battalions, 40 guns, and six regiments of cavalry, had directed a turning movement against Mukhtar Pacha's rear with the view of cutting him off from Kars and Erzeroum, and crushing him thus, once for all, between the two principal portions of our army. His march across the mountains was, of course, somewhat hampered by his cannons and military train, which compelled him to seek and follow a rather circuitous carriage road. He was at first guided by the Arpa Tchai River down to Kotchiran. From here he passed over to Dighur, where he left two battalions, and then, wheeling round to the north-west, he chose for his mark the Orlok Hill and Vezinkoi. This village, strongly entrenched, secured Mukhtar's position and his communications with Kars. I stated in my last letter that the Mushir, on hearing of General Lazareff's serious movement, detached Selim Pacha with fifteen battalions to meet him. It seems, however, that he had reinforced a few days later these troops

with another division, entrusting the whole corps to the command of his lieutenant, Raschid Pacha, President of the Military Council, and now our prisoner.

Mukhtar's obvious intent was to weigh with all his available forces on General Lazareff, trying to crush him or to compel him to retreat whence he came, and then fall on the other fraction of our army here. That he had this idea is ascertained by the unanimous evidence of the prisoners, and it is, moreover, in accordance with common sense. General Lazareff, however, had in the meantime occupied on the 13th the Oghur Hill, after a sharp engagement. Then he telegraphed to the Grand Duke's headquarters that Mukhtar was before him with superior forces, and he urged, therefore, that from our side a simultaneous attack might be directed against the Turkish lines. This message reached here precisely at three o'clock on the morning of the 14th. The Commander-in-Chief at once complied with Lazareff's request. I have already pointed out the remarkable circumstance that a field telegraph had been established with laudable celerity and regularity throughout the length of that circuitous line of operations. Although it was only protected by Cossack picquets, it had never been interrupted but once, by a mere accident, and for two hours.

Our whole strategic plan was suspended on that thin wire. On its strength depended the fate of this campaign in Armenia, because it alone rendered an harmonious tactical action possible which secured success, and without which we could not hope to dislodge the enemy from his strongholds. The Pacha, ignoring either this state of things, or, in his Turkish prejudice against all innovations, scorning that peculiarly useful modern contrivance, laid no stress on its establishment. He found out subsequently that that wire was in fact around his neck ready to strangle him at a moment's notice. And so it did. The battle on the 2nd instant was, it seems, the most efficient practical lesson taught to our strategists. They recognized at last their former capital faults and blunders, both with regard to general conception and to tactical details. Generals Obruteneff and Gurstchin were yet experimenting on the 2nd instant, when, in reference to the available force, their plan was too complicated and extended. The visible good effect of General Sholkownikoff's turning movement then rendered it obvious in which direction it was best to act. So that operation was again performed, but judiciously on a larger scale, and aiming at more important points.

We had no unnecessary trouble, bloodshed, and neutralizing of our forces before the impregnable Little Yagni Hill. We had

not abandoned again the Great Yagui, the guardian bastion of Mukhtai's front, but kept and fortified it. We did not rely on Mohammedan cavalry scouts for the security of our army and the watching of the enemy's doings, but closed him in with two divisions, which established a solid curtain of infantry double posts, with guards and regulars patrolling before their encampments. It was at last universally acknowledged that the Awly-Yer Hill was the enemy's centre pivot, and that the Great Yagui was doubtless the key to his position. Its possession alone enabled us to attack that all-important point. I have already stated in my last letter how stupid it was on the part of the Turks to evacuate it. General Heimann was charged to carry the Awly-Yer at any cost, and had for that purpose the gallant division of the Caucasian Grenadiers and 56 cannon at his disposal. The Moscow Grenadiers, posted on his left, received orders to refrain from acting until that hill was taken. They formed the reserve, and observed the enemy's movements on the Aladja Dagh. Opposite this mountain a heavy battery of 24 pounders had since the 12th bombarded the enemy's camp there night and day, at intervals of fifteen minutes, in order to disturb it and harass the Turks. Our right wing was covered by the Ardahan Brigade, under General Komaroff, and some regiments of cavalry, which were intended to check the garrison of Kars, and that of the Little Yagui.

Early in the morning of the 15th at about five o'clock, his Imperial Highness the Grand Duke and General Louis Melikoff left with their staffs the Karajal camp, and proceeded to the environs of Subatan, where the Moscow Division of Grenadiers had their position. I was not ready to accompany them, not having been informed in time of the news concerning General Lazareff's message and the subsequent intentions, thus I was only able to start about two hours later together with the Russian Consul Mr. Obermuller, who formerly exercised his functions in Erzeroum. We rode over the well known plain stretching from the Karajal hills to the Aladja Dagh, towards Subatan. We had no time to spare, for sharp firing at the Awly Yer attracted our attention. There, I well knew, the fate of the day would be decided, and therefore we were determined to reach that point as quickly as possible. Distances here, though they appear insignificant, are in fact enormous because objects for estimating them, such as trees, houses, &c., are utterly wanting. One sees a hill before him of apparently small size, and is thus inclined to judge it only a walk of an hour from the point of observation, but on trying the distance one finds that it takes

three or four hours' fast riding to reach it. Then the little hillock turns out to be a bulky cluster of plateaus and summits of some miles in extent.

We followed the foot of the Aladja. The guns placed on its terraces flung from time to time some shells at our reserves and the heavy battery, without doing any harm. None the less they became somewhat annoying on account of their disagreeable howl and the dry crack of their bursting. The Awly-Yer, which soon stood threatening before us, had a more serious, warlike aspect than its big neighbour. It was encircled by two broad rings of white smoke—one around its basis, produced by the incessant firing of fifty-six cannons, and the other, on its summit, by the musketry and artillery of the Turks, and the bursting Russian projectiles. This time the Russian gunners behaved well. They had placed their pieces at the reasonable distance of 1,800 yards, and laying aside the inefficient shells, concentrated a shrapnel shower on that part of the enemy's front which had been selected to be assailed by the storming battalions. Balls of white smoke, waving for awhile in the calm air like balloons, indicated that the terrible messengers of death and destruction had burst at the proper point for sending fragments and bullets among the lines of the defenders.

I observed how at once the musketry ceased after the bursting on a certain spot, and only a few minutes afterwards it began again, when living men had replaced the dead and wounded. Three strong columns of Grenadiers lay in clusters on the steepest parts of the northern side of the hill, as though riveted to it. They were waiting there for final orders, in comparative security, because the Turks behind the breast-works were unable to hit them. The latter could not venture to stoop forward for that purpose without the risk of being shot immediately by the Russian artillerymen or tirailleurs. In this manner the fighting continued for three mortal hours, and had apparently come to a standstill. Already the suspicion rose in my mind that this engagement, like the former ones which I had the opportunity of witnessing, would end without any other result than that of mere slaughter. We thought it convenient to rest awhile, and had some breakfast. Its principal ingredient was the Russian black rye bread, which is hard enough to be used instead of cannon-balls in case of need.

The fighting on all other points than the Awly-Yer was insignificant. The Aladja and the Little Yagni continued their indifferent cannonading, aiming at random. All my attention was of course drawn to the Awly-Yer, where perhaps the

future destiny of the Turkish Empire was at stake. Seeing no advance, I thought that General Heimann might again have failed to understand the full importance of the task entrusted to him. Why did those Grenadiers not move, although sure to be badly dealt with if they finally had to retire before the enemy's pursuit? It was a moment of anxiety and disappointment. The idea that Mukhtar had evidently neglected to fortify and garrison that hill with the utmost care, was, however, somewhat comforting. Then, on a sudden, three Turkish cannons boomed to our left beyond the Subitan streamlet and ravine, which separate the Awly-Yer from the Aladja. From this mountain descended, towards the Awly-Yer, a strong line of Turkish tirailleurs, coming obviously to the rescue of that hard-pressed position. But before they could even cross the ravine their advance was arrested by a Russian line which compelled them to withdraw. At the same time the three columns of Russian grenadiers told off for the assault on the Awly-Yer moved onward up that hill.

We were in our saddles in a twinkling, and galloped ahead, with the view of witnessing this supreme achievement. A rocky ravine, however, with perpendicular borders, only visible when about ten yards off its margin, checked our speed, and compelled us to make a circuit. Finally, we found a path leading down and up again. There we discovered the naked bodies of apparently Russian soldiers in an advanced state of decay. They were not mutilated or disfigured. Unluckily, we had at that moment no leisure to ascertain whether other victims of Turkish brutality lay unburied on that dismal spot, so we hurried on. Then, again, large tracts of the dry grass which uniformly covers the fields and pastures were burning before us, ignited by the Turkish shells. Our horses snorted, frightened by the approach of the flames, but we forced the animals through. The black Grenadiers swarmed on all sides over the yellow hill. Steadily they climbed towards the summit, always firing, in face of the desperate resistance of the Turks, who

stormed,
the cone,
top level

with shells and shrapnels. When we passed one of them, a colonel ceased firing, and said with proud satisfaction — "Go and look at the work we have done up there. I think we have served them well." At that moment repeated hurrahs sounded through the air, and the Grenadiers jumped in crowds over the enemy's ditches and parapets. Then the

baffled Turks, relinquishing all hope, ran for their lives, pursued by bullets and bayonets.

The formidable redoubt was at last taken by that gallant onslaught. When we arrived at the foot of the steep, shell after shell was still fired at the middle part by a Turkish battery on the slope of the Aladja next to the Awly-Yer, and by cannons on the top of a commanding mountain opposite it, bursting behind and before us. But when all our men had arrived at the summit, that firing stopped on a sudden, and the terrible hill which, ten minutes before, was all fire, smoke, and noise, was once more silent. To our right we saw General Heimann riding to the top with his staff. We reached it about the same time as he, and I believe I was the first to have the honour of congratulating him on so brilliant a victory. General Heimann, losing no time, paraded his soldiers, and ordered immediately a sharp pursuit, which was carried out in a clever manner. They met with only a feeble resistance on the part of the Turks, who hastily withdrew in disorder.

The next fortified plateau to the south-west, situated just before that of Vezinkoi, was also stormed within an hour. In the meantime we saw the white smoke rise on the opposite side of that village. There General Lazareff assailed the enemy from his rear, and barred his retreat to Kars. The batteries also closed in with the scattered Turks wherever they perceived them, and covered them with a hailstorm of projectiles. The vanquished foe tried to rally and escape in all directions, but found no issue, and was soon close hedged in by infantry, artillery, and cavalry. Here it is said that Mukhtar himself was wounded in the hand, and sought for attendance and shelter in Kars, abandoning thus his doomed army. In truth, however, he had not received a scratch. He had commanded the battle from the summit of a mountain, the name of which I do not remember just now, next to the east of the Awly-Yer, from which a couple of guns still continued to molest us. I saw him there through my field-glass, together with General Kemball, if I am not mistaken. When the Awly-Yer was conquered by the Russians, those gentlemen disappeared, and had a narrow escape to Kars, by availing themselves of the opening between us and General Lazareff.

Another party of Turks—the bulk of the garrison of the Awly-Yer and its environs—were pursued through a pretty large valley, which is formed by the upper part of the Subatan streamlet and its tributaries. The battle had been won in a brilliant style, but yet the trophies had not been counted, and

still separate Turkish brigades on the Aladja and the Little Yagmı made a show of resistance. The parapets and ditches of the Awly Yer redoubt looked indeed very much like those of the Great Yagmı twelve days before, after it had just been stormed. Rows of dead Turks, some horribly disfigured by shell fragments were to be seen upon the earthworks and at the bottom of the ditches. Some were literally torn to pieces by the shrapnels. I think most of them were killed by the artillery, which indeed had done its duty this time. An officer of high rank lay dead on his back in the ditch. He was a pacha or colonel, perhaps, but it could not be made out because the soldiers had stripped him of his overcoat and boots. The contracted brow and the fierce expression of his lips proved that he had met with a sudden death. His fine Arab horse lay dead by his side. Very few wounded remained on the field when we came up.

I don't think that the Russians have sustained great losses by that assault because in the first place the shrapnels had told their number and rushed their number and began and in the second place they began to permit them to fire over the earthworks with good effect. Most of their rifle shots were aimed too high. The inside of the redoubt comprising the whole natural platform of the hill, was ploughed with shells and strewn with their fragments and bullets flattened on the stones. Three Krupp guns with the manufacturer's name on them together with their carriages and ammunition were captured there. One of them had its right wheel broken by a shell, but the other two were in serviceable condition so the Russian officers tried their range at the fugitives. The first shot, however, fired without the necessary elevation nearly fell among a column of their own soldiers.

The Turks are evidently not in want of rifle ammunition yet. About a railway truckload of cartridges partly in their original boxes partly in loose heaps or strewn singly over the ground might have afforded the means for annihilating a whole army. Some empty two wheeled bullock carts and tents almost in rags constituted the remainder of the booty. The tents were immediately cut into strips by the Russian soldiers who wrapped them around their feet as an excellent substitute for stockings. Lines of cavalry, with their horse artillery now trotted up between us and the Great Yagmı, riding towards Kars in order to cut off the enemy's retreat. It was now four o'clock, the weather was fine and rather hot, but notwithstanding my curiosity I resisted the temptation to

follow up the advancing columns to Vezinkoi, where General Lazareff, descending from the Orlok Mountain, had begun a decisive attack. The day before he had already repulsed a reconnaissance directed against him by Raschid Pacha. To him and to General Heimann—especially to the latter—the prominent part of this day's glory is due. The Emperor will perhaps create him Count of Awly-Yer—at least he has deserved such a distinction.

On riding back to the Karajal camp, I had the good fortune to witness a sharp engagement between the Moscow Grenadiers and the Turks in the Aladja Dagh. The Grand Duke, who observed that attack from the heavy battery, which was now useless and silent, had ordered another regiment to the advance. The Turks answered with spasmodic cannon and rifle firing, but were gradually driven from terrace to terrace beyond their camp to the summit of the mountain. About half-past four they gave up further resistance, and retired to the opposite side, leaving everything they had in the hands of the Russians, with the exception of some of their guns. They hovered there in the wilderness for a while, without water, food, fuel, or shelter, and then despairing, surrendered at about half-past eight the same evening. They denied that they had cannons, but they had, and it is likely that they have hidden them in the recesses of the Aladja. Hitherto the Russians have had no time to seek for them, but they will do so, I hope, before the snow is likely to cover that mountain. Thus well-nigh the entire Turkish host had been swept away. Unfortunately, the garrison of the Little Yagni, watching their time, when everybody's attention was drawn to Vezinkoi, escaped with stores, cannons, and ammunition to Kars. This, I regret to say, was the fault of our cavalry, which did nothing to prevent the retreat, on the plea of its being dark already, else it would have been literally impossible for the Turks to slip through our lines, as the hill is surrounded on all sides by dry and level ground. Colonel Kavalinsky, chief of the staff of the cavalry, reported at nine o'clock to the Grand Duke that seven pachas, thirty-six cannons, and twenty-six battalions had surrendered and laid down their arms. On the following day also many prisoners and some guns were captured. The exact number of the enemy's loss has not been recorded yet, but, at all events its total will amount to nearly three-quarters of its original strength. That is to say, his entire army has been scattered, destroyed, or captured. Among the captives we had the doubtful honour of seeing here at the Karajal camp the seven pachas and some colonels. We remarked among them Raschid Pacha, Lieutenant-General and President of the

Military Council, Hussein Kyazim Pacha, chief of Mukhtar's staff, Mustafa Pacha, and the so called Madjir Omer Pacha. The last named a genuine Russian by birth, educated in a military school at St Petersburg, and a former Russian officer, took an active part in the Hungarian revolution in 1849, and coming over to Turkey with Kossuth and the other refugees, embraced Islamism. Thenceforward he distinguished himself as a fervent adherent of the Prophet. As years have elapsed since that time he has nothing to fear from the resentment of his countrymen, and will be considered and treated like the other Turkish generals. By the Grand Duke's orders each of these gentlemen received a good deal of money for his travelling expenses.

The Russian losses are about 50 officers and 1 600 men killed and wounded, numbers quite insignificant as compared with the result of the battle. The consequences are uncertain yet, but some hope that Kars may be induced to surrender is still entertained, and negotiations for that purpose are said to be going on. I do not believe, however, that the Turkish commander there is inclined to give the fortress over without fighting for it. In the meantime General Heermann is marching across the Soghanlı Daglı (Onion Mountain) towards Erzeroum, the garrison of which is exceedingly feeble. Should, as there can be little doubt, General Lazareff be sharp and lucky enough to shut out Ismail Pacha from Erzeroum, and crush him between his own force and that of Tergukasoff that fortress cannot then be defended. Its chief source of weakness, as I have said, is its extent. It requires an army of at least 50,000 men to garrison its numerous detached forts, and the central enceinte. The Russians, therefore, must make it their principal object to prevent all succour of men and material from entering the city, and then it cannot fail to succumb to a general escalade. If even Dervish Pacha should advance with the greatest imaginable despatch from Batoum via Trebizond, he cannot reach Erzeroum before General Heermann. It is true that the weather, which is as bad as possible, there being continuous rain, may prove a more serious hindrance to the progress of the Russians than all the Turkish forces together. The Battle of Aladja Daglı will, of course, redound to the honour of his Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Michael in the Russian annals. We hardly expected so brilliant a victory after the series of inconceivable blunders committed since the opening of the campaign. The camp is being removed from here to Wladikars, but very slowly, because the means of transport are insufficient.

The following letters are from the Correspondent who had been with Mukhtar Pacha throughout the campaign, and who, besides witnessing, may be said to have shared the defeat of that commander. For some of the details, which only the Staff could know, the Correspondent was indebted to the General himself :—

□ ERZEROUH, *October 24th*.—The tide of fortune has turned, and I find myself here part of the crowd that fled in disorder before the Russian attack of the 14th and 15th inst. It was a terrible disaster for the Turkish arms, all the more so that sanguine expectations were entertained as to the power of resistance of the Ottoman Army acting on the defensive. To understand the catastrophe it is necessary to go back a couple of weeks. We, that is the Correspondents of European journals, tried in vain to telegraph the situation. We were met by that passive resistance which characterizes the Ottoman Government. A telegram had first to be translated into Turkish at the headquarters, and modified at will by the young staff officers who had a smattering of French. Even then the authorities at Stamboul often took exception to the mild messages sent; but it was only three weeks after that the Correspondent was notified that, by "order of the superior authority," his message of such and such a date was intercepted. Over and over again, when the crisis was imminent, I tried to communicate the fact by telegraph. All to no purpose. No one who has not lived in countries like this can imagine the systematic obstruction which mars the best efforts of a Correspondent.

I have already telegraphed viâ Syra some details of the initial fighting in the plain north of the Turkish positions on the Aladja mountains. During three days fierce attacks were made by the Russians on the two hills—the Greater and Lesser Yagni, which block the passage to Kars. We estimated the Russian loss at 12,000 hors de combat on the occasion. This was on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of October. Then came a pause. Turkish officers told me confidentially the day on which we were to enter Gumri (Alexandropol), and soldiers ate their maigre pilaff all the more cheerfully, thinking over the flesh pots that awaited them beyond the Arpa Tchai. The capture of Kizil Tepe and our advance into the plain had filled every one with hope; but dark was the disappointment which followed the order of the 8th to abandon the hard-won heights, and retire to our old bleak quarters on the slopes of Aladja. Mukhtar Pacha's spies had brought him intelligence

of the arrival of heavy Russian reinforcements, and others were said to be en route for the camp. Our position was deemed too extended to resist a serious attack from superior numbers, and hence the order to retire. It was ten o'clock on a bleak stormy night, and after the Marshal's tent had been already struck, that the rest of us at headquarters were notified that a move was necessary. Even General Kemball had no earlier warning. I myself, at half past ten, wrote, at the dictation of a staff officer, the note which warned him to get ready. The camp fires still blazed in the plain, though the troops were already marching for their new quarters. Not a musket shot announced that the enemy's outposts had cognizance of the retreat, and, on the whole, as regards secrecy, the retrograde movement was admirably conducted. Not so, however, from the point of view of order. It has rarely been my chance to witness such utter confusion. No one seemed to know where the new position was. I met

"Cimmerian darkness of the
officers demanding in vain
men. I found Dr Casson
and his ambulance in a state of hopeless despair. The train
of rude ox carts sent to transport the wounded and hospital
material had disappeared in the darkness. The tents were
still standing, and Dr Casson and his young colleague, ill
with typhoid were literally "left alone." The Doctor prayed
me, as I, too, rode by in hopeless search of the new head-
quarters, to send him back his arabas but as at least five
hundred of these vehicles were groaning and creaking over
the Cyclopean rock masses, I was soon obliged to give up my
search. I rode on up the slopes of Mount Aladja meeting
everywhere parties of troops and transport waggons, every
one asking every one else where they were supposed to go.
After three hours of weary search I resigned myself to
destiny, and, dismounting from my horse, lay down on the
scanty grass crisp with hoar frost. I tried to sleep in vain—
people stumbled over me in the dark. Bewildered soldiers
roused me a hundred times to ask the way, and camels and

off but as yet no tents had been pitched. I found the Marshal eating his breakfast outside his tent door. The staff officers were wandering about looking for their tents, misled during the night. Mine was nowhere to be found, so I camped under shelter of a rock. There I indited the telegram which I hope has reached you. I took the precaution of

sending three simultaneously. One I got translated into Turkish and sent from the camp. Another I sent by special messenger to Kars, to be forwarded to a friend in Erzeroum, and thence to London; and a third I sent by courier to Trebizond and Syra, to be thence sent on. From old experience I know what Turkish translations are, especially when made by an interested staff officer expressly told off to take the sting out of unfavourable messages. Consequently I didn't rely much on my camp despatch. Viâ Erzeroum I had better hopes, as an intelligent agent there would at once perceive the gist of my message and re-establish its meaning when translated into French.

On the morning of the 9th October it was evident, from the movements of the Russian patrols, that they were infinitely astonished at our nocturnal retreat. They couldn't apparently understand the thing, and their manœuvres showed they were fearful of a stratagem. Towards eight o'clock the entire Russian Army was in movement, advancing straight towards us. Seven squadrons of Cossacks, preceded by a long line of cavalry skirmishers, came first, closely followed by an ominous-looking line of batteries. It was a moment of intense anxiety for us. We believed the enemy was about to make a general assault. The Cossacks entered Subatan, a village we had held previously, in front of our centre. Five minutes after eight guns were in position on the ridge above the village. Hadji Veli, another village to the left, was next occupied, and simultaneously a column of infantry scaled the isolated hill of Kizil Tepe, the capture of which had earned for Mukhtar Pacha the title of "Ghazi," or "Victorious," conferred by the Sultan, together with a sabre of honour, a decoration in diamonds, and a present of two horses from the Imperial stables. About eleven o'clock the entire Russian line had advanced close under our positions, and the eight guns at Subatan opened fire. We sent out three battalions in skirmishing order to check the advance. A battery of Krupps took up its position on a rocky knoll and replied to the Russian fire. At one P.M. the infantry were engaged, and five Russian batteries added their fire to that first in action. The Russian batteries are of eight guns each, and the forty-eight pieces thus brought forward, formed in semicircle, literally deluged our advanced line with projectiles, especially directed against the Turkish batteries. Fortunately for the Turkish gunners, the enemy's fire was execrable. The vast majority of the shells burst two or three hundred yards short or over. Now and then a shell burst almost on the Turkish guns, but these were the exceptions. The musketry

fire, extending over a line of about three miles, for nearly all our force was engaged at this hour, was violent in the extreme, especially on the Turkish side, where the soldiers plied their Martini Peabody rifles with an absurd rapidity. The enemy's fire was much more deliberate, and I noticed their officers galloping to and fro to check any excessive outbreak of musketry fire which might occur. Long after sunset the scintillations of rifle-fire continued, emphasized by the broad gleam of the artillery.

After much reflection I am still unable to make out since what was the object of this engagement. We had abandoned deliberately certain positions, and certainly we did not try to retake them. Neither did the Russians seem disposed to push their occupation farther up the Aladja. We lost nearly one thousand hors de combat on that day and it was pitiable to see the state of the wounded. In the Turkish Army here there is absolutely no provision made for carrying the wounded off the field. Those who can limp away struggle on often for hours seeking help and those more severely hit often rest forty eight hours on the field. I had been unable to find my tent, and was obliged to bivouac a second night on the hill side. All night long moaning crowds of wounded came issuing out of the darkness like troubled phantoms, asking feebly for the "basta bine" (the ambulance). No one knew where it was, and the miserable sufferers went on groaning and complaining into the darkness. I afterwards discovered that the ambulances were just three miles away on our left flank. I venture to say that not one of those poor fellows found relief that night and all of them must have passed the long cold night like myself, freezing amid the rocks.

On the 10th all was still. Not a shot from either side, except from one large position gun which the Russians had established on Kızıl Tepe, and from which they threw occasional shells against the redoubt on Lakırdı Tepe, a conical hill on our extreme right. Large masses of Russian troops moved over the plain by Kaback Tepe, ultimately occupying the greater Yagmı hill, and long columns were seen defiling towards our right, marching in the direction of the ruined city of Ani, on the banks of the Arpa Tchai River. These latter subsequently disappeared and we were at a loss to account for their destination. In the afternoon the Marshal and his staff rode to the summit of Aladja to reconnoitre, but nothing could be made out. The 11th passed without incident save the continued shelling of Lakırdı Tepe by the heavy gun on Kızıl Tepe. On the 13th the Russians made a reconnaissance towards Kars, and some heavy firing took place in

that direction. The enemy was evidently trying how far he could venture without drawing us from our positions; and the knowledge thus they gained proved fatal in the end. Mukhtar Pacha was evidently resolved, *coûte-qui-coûte*, to stand on the defensive. Towards sunset the same evening we were most disagreeably surprised by the range of two siege guns placed in position near Subatan. The headquarters were concealed from view behind a rocky ledge, from the crest of which the Marshal was in the habit of observing the plain with a large telescope. I was sitting at my tent door, for by this time I had managed to find a tent. A loud whirring noise attracted my attention, and next moment a sixteen-centimètre shell burst with a crash not twenty yards from the General and his staff. The range was enormous. From the flash of the gun till the arrival of the shell seventeen seconds elapsed. The enemy's guns were at a distance of seven thousand yards, and, besides, our position was some eight hundred feet above the plain. As a first shot at an unknown distance, the correctness of the aim was remarkable in the extreme. Shell after shell followed in rapid succession, some directed against headquarters, the position of which must have been indicated by spies, as the tents were hidden behind rocks, and some against the fortified hill of Evliatepessi, on our extreme left. All night long this shelling continued; and for my personal safety I was obliged to pack up and move to the ambulance, situated, as I have said before, some three miles to the left. This was a fortunate move for me, as it gave me an opportunity of witnessing the turning movement of the enemy, which resulted in our total defeat. Dr. Casson's ambulance was pitched in a narrow gorge close by the Turkish one. A troop of Arab horse watched the plain below and guarded the ravine which ran close by. It was midnight as I established myself in the tent kindly given me by the doctor. He seemed very uneasy about his wounded. The ambulance flags flying beside the tents were about as big as an ordinary pocket-handkerchief, and there was every reason to fear that they might not be visible to the artillerists below. It was decided to move from this dangerous spot higher up the hill; and accordingly next morning the change was effected. The tents we pitched on the brow of the long slope of Aladjä stretching towards Kars, whence we commanded a view of both plains, north and south.

To render the battles of the 14th and 15th instant intelligible a slight description of the ground is necessary. Aladjä is a mountain 8,800 feet in height, its base of an elongated oval form, running east and west. The summit, of a conical form, is

towards the south eastern extremity of the oval. At the same point it throws out a large spur to the southward. Both the summit and this spur were strongly entrenched, and occupied by eight or ten battalions and some batteries of field artillery. The bulk of the Turkish forces occupied the lower portions of the northern slope, and numbered from thirty-five to forty thousand regular troops. On the extreme right (east) is a flat topped hill, named Lâkırıdğı Tepe, and on the left a similar one, Evlâtepeşi (the Awlis Hill), which, as will be seen later on, played an important part in the fighting. To the north of Aladja is an immense plain, the mouth of the Kars Valley. To the east of this plain are the isolated hills of Kariyal, Kızıl Tepe, and Utch Tepe, all three in the possession of the enemy at the commencement of the fighting. Towards Kars, that is westward, the plain is bounded by two hills, the greater and lesser Yagni. The greater Yagni is midway between Evlâtepeşi and the lesser Yagni, and, as I have already stated, was occupied by the Russians after our retrograde movement of the 8th instant. The other two hills were in our hands, and strongly entrenched. Continuing the line formed by these three hills to the south of the western extremity of Aladja are three similar isolated hills, one exactly opposite the long end of the Aladja oval. Then comes a large plain like valley, and beyond, at some eight miles distance, a chain of mountains gradually lessening in height towards Kars, and slightly oblique to Aladja.

I passed the 14th in comparative tranquillity, watching the huge shells from the Russian guns of position burst on the devoted crest of Evlâtepeşi and in the Marshals group of tents. The enemy's troops were swarming below—moving incessantly. The insects of a disturbed ant hill could not have shown greater activity. Far out in the long dreamy plain where distance seemed annihilated by the glassy atmosphere, the Cossacks trooped and trained towards the wide opening between the Yagni hills, evidently watching the Kars valley lest any unforeseen advent of reinforcements might derange the storm about to burst on us. It was half past two in the afternoon as field glass in hand, I strolled leisurely on the hill crest above the ambulance. The eye ranged far and wide over a tract of plain on either side which it would be a long day's journey to traverse. The boom of a gun from one of the mamelons to the south of Aladja attracted my attention. "Some stray Cossacks," I said to myself, and I turned my glass to the northern plain. Another boom, and another, and then the long rattle of musketry. This time my accustomed eye perceived the long white line

of drifting vapour which nothing but constant practice could distinguish from the mist lines of these lofty hills. Another look, and slender creeping lines were visible on the distant slopes. Here was the explanation of the disappearance of the Russian reinforcements. The enemy, having made a long *détour* from the camp of Karajal, turning our right flank by Ani and Dighur, had marched parallel to the rear of our position, and were actually attacking the rear of our left flank. The Marshal and his staff were already on the hill whence proceeded the cannonade. The Russians had occupied a lofty hill to the north-west, where they had placed a couple of batteries. Some Turkish battalions despatched across the valley were furiously assailing the flank of the enemy's line of march, and the latter were replying from their upper positions. It was easy to distinguish the lines of fire. The Turks, as usual, plied their Martini-Peabody rifles with a zeal that streaked the hill with one snowy line of palpitating smoke. The Russians, as usual, fired with deliberation. I could almost count the rifle shots on their side, though the force they deployed was fully equal to that of the attack. The enemy's artillery was principally engaged shelling Turkish forces further on towards what turned out to be the objective point. Till near sunset the combat continued, the Russian columns still streaming onward, apparently heedless of the serried volleys and file-firing of their adversaries. The Turks, who it seemed numbered eight battalions, together with seven despatched from Bayazid, and three squadrons of irregular cavalry, finding themselves worsted, commenced retiring towards the extremity of the hill range next Kars. The sun set redly beyond the distant summits, and with its rays the fire of the combatants died out.

The Russians had advanced half way from the higher hill whence they had commenced to the final conical hill which terminated abruptly in the flat valley. Mukhtar Pacha, deeming the day's fighting over, turned rein and rode with his staff over the long slopes leading to his headquarters. I, too, was tired. I turned my horse to graze, and, lying down on the scant yellow grass, gazed on the scene of conflict. A quarter of an hour passed, and streaks of fire were seen issuing from the point to which the Russians had advanced. I couldn't make it out at first. Little by little these streaks increased in number, and the terminal hill seemed all ablaze with bursting projectiles. But there was no sound of artillery. The enemy was bombarding the position with Congreve rockets. The fire was so rapid that the sky was all ablaze. At least sixty per minute were discharged. To me they

seemed to burst much too high to do any execution unless the heads were charged with bullets. Then I saw long lines of flickering fire go up the hill, parallel to the crest of flame that crowned the crest. Half a dozen times these fiery lines approached and recoiled. Then they mingled, then came a pause. Rocket and musketry fire ceased. I judged that the Russians had taken the hill. Turkish officers laughed at me, told me the position was impregnable, but I retired to my tent with sad misgivings. I ordered everything to be packed and the horses saddled ready for any contingency. I said to myself, if the enemy has captured that hill, they are between us and Kars, and to-morrow's dawn must see a desperate conflict. I couldn't sleep. I went to the tent of Dr. Crisson, where he watched beside his sick colleague. We talked over the immediate prospects. He was very uneasy. I told him I believed a retreat was imminent, and that should the Russians have captured the terminal hill behind us, we should have to retreat on the morrow over a slender strip of ground swept by the enemy's fire. While we were speaking two battalions went by in the dark, followed by long trains of waggons. Then came artillery touzons and pack mules, and long lines of baggage camels succeeded. It was a procession without end. Long into the night the cavalcade passed us by. It was evident a retreat had commenced, and yet no orders for the ambulance had arrived. Dr. Crisson called up the officer attached to the ambulance and sent him with his dragoman to headquarters to know what should be done. In half an hour the man returned to say that the headquarters had shifted its place under the incessant shell fire of the two heavy guns in the plain, and that it now occupied the place of the commissariat department already retiring. Mules were being waited for to bear off the baggage of the officers, and then the staff would retire. Timely notice would be given. We waited on through the dreary hours of the night. No one could sleep, for it was evident a crisis was imminent. Night hung darkly over the long weird mountain slopes. Not a star was visible in the inky expanse above. All was still, save the faint jingling of the artillery horses going by and when from time to time the thundering roll of the Russian heavy guns followed the lightning like flash in the plain below, and the heavy shells went screaming hoarsely to Lvhatepessi, and the former site of the staff.

I had retired to my tent and sunk into an uneasy slumber. A thundering detonation roused me. A heavy shell had burst within twenty yards of my tent. I sprang to my feet and rushed from the tent. The white smoke was still curling

upwards from the frosty turf, torn into a black circle by the shell. Another projectile whistled over my head and burst against the rocks beyond. Every one in the ambulance was astir. We were being deliberately shelled. Dr. Casson, half dressed, was having his sick and wounded carried on litters higher up the mountain, out of range of the 16-centimetre projectiles. His colleague, the young volunteer doctor, was prostrate after the reaction of a severe typhoid attack. I had leaped to horse as the second projectile burst, and never shall I forget that poor feeble young man lying among the bare, bleak rocks in the grey mountain air, as I galloped by. If the Russians fired deliberately on the ambulance, it was a piece of atrocity. I can scarce believe it was so. For four days the ambulance was in the same place and was respected, although well in range of the heavy guns. On the morning in question the ambulances were still in the same place, but the ridiculously small flags against which I had remonstrated the day before, hung heavily against the masts. It may be that the officers and gunners of the battery were relieved, and that the new comers were unaware of the nature of our camp. If not, the thing was a piece of unparalleled barbarism.

Seeing that the projectiles continued to fall within the ambulance, I rode hurriedly away to get out of range. Mukhtar Pacha, accompanied by General Sir Arnold Kemball, came sweeping by. I rode after them, and together we mounted the steep hill at the western extremity of Aladja. A battalion already occupied the heights, sheltering behind some scanty earthworks. The Marshal sat under cover of a parapet and ate his frugal breakfast. Already in the plain below, to the east towards Subatan, the enemy was swarming in thousands, and still the heavy guns fired incessantly on Evliatepessi. Twenty times the ground on the top of this unfortunate hill was ploughed up in a manner to render it difficult to understand how any troops could exist within the crowning redoubt. It was seven o'clock when the Russian attack developed itself. Some ten battalions were seen advancing between the two deep ravines which seam the plain. In advance came two batteries of eight guns each, a third in reserve. At half-past seven the artillery opened fire on Evliatepessi, the shells falling with an accuracy which contrasted strongly with previous artillery fire. The two heavy guns near Hadji Veli continued their terrible fire, each shell falling right in the middle of the redoubt. On Evliatepessi, an isolated hill blocking the road between the two ravines, the shells rained incessantly. Behind the Russian guns the attacking force

opened out, and presently took the advance of the guns. At the same time another column, with one battery, passed between the assailed position and the greater Yagm Hill, attacking it right angles to the main force. At half past nine the first musketry fire was heard, and from that moment the dull roar of small arms was continuous. The entire plateau on the summit of Evliatepessi was one cloud of dense white smoke which reeled and palpitated with bursting shells and the fire of the three guns of the defence. Four battalions—some two thousand men—held the trenches below the crest. The Russian columns crept nearer and nearer, and the artillery was close enough to be under musketry fire. At last came a moment when the gradually lessening fire of the defence showed how fatally the Russian fire was telling. Mukhtu Pacha ordered up a battery from the rear to sweep the front of the hill with its fire.

The critical moment had arrived. We had at least twenty battalions in the old positions and on the summits of Aladja. The hill attacked Evliatepessi commanded the line of retreat: thus once lost the forces on Aladja were cut off. Seeing the gradually lessening fire of Evliatepessi and deeming its capture inevitable as we had not a single battalion to send to its relief, I determined to leave the hill where the General and his staff were placed, and seek safer quarters. I rode across the stony plain towards Sivritepe, a triple hill to the rear strongly intrenched and armed with artillery. As I rode towards this point, I noticed that the enemy from the positions in rear of our left, where they had established themselves on the preceding evening were already firing on the road yet cumbered with waggons and mules. I turned to the right to get out of range of the shells and there in the plain met an enormous crowd of Bashî Bazouks on horseback, Circassians, Kurds and Arabs. They were brandishing their lances, whirling their matchlock guns and otherwise conducting themselves in a seemingly warlike manner. I halted among them on the ridge which divides the Kars plain at this point. At one o'clock the Russians carried Evliatepessi by assault, after four hours and a half of infantry combat. At this juncture the Marshal left the hill on which he had stood since morning. Scarce five minutes elapsed after the capture of Evliatepessi when the Russian field batteries covered by a cloud of Cossacks, dashed forward between the captured position and the greater Yagm Hill. The fire of the two or three batteries thus brought into action swept obliquely the only line of retreat left to the Aladja troops, and at the same moment the

Russians established in rear of our left flank opened fire. The line of retreat was all but impassable. Lingered convoys still struggled over the stony surface; and a couple of battalions, with a haste scarcely dignified, were making for Sivritepe. I must here state that through all the confusion which followed, Mukhtar Pacha bore himself like a true soldier, retiring only when his soldiers left him no other choice. The irregular cavalry, principally composed of Arabs from Orfa and Aleppo, fled in disorder as the first shells burst over them, retiring *pêle-mêle* behind Sivritepe.

At this juncture the Russians made a general advance in front by Evliatepessi, and on our right flank from the positions won on the preceding evening. There was no further resistance. The battalions occupying the forts on Sivritepe fled in disorder. As I looked on them from a distance, I could scarce believe it was infantry I saw in such a disordered crowd. I supposed for the moment the fugitives were spectators or else Bashi-Bazouks. A few minutes undeceived me. They were Nizams, the infantry of the line. Nearer and nearer advanced the Russian batteries in front and flank. I left the commanding ridge of the plain on which I stood, and made for our last position, the hill of Vezinkoi, not far from Kars. This is an isolated hill in the plain, and takes its name from a ruined Armenian village close under its brow. Here, around a large water reservoir, were accumulated the waggons, mules, and camels of the commissariat sent off the night before from Aladja. Some four thousand irregular cavalry and panic-stricken infantry were mixed up with the ox-waggons and camels. It was a scene of utter confusion. A reserve battalion of regular troops, deployed in open order with fixed bayonets, prevented the runaways from flying to Kars. Nearer and nearer thundered the Russian guns, and each detonation thrilled the disorganized mass with terror. It was only by a stratagem I got through the blocking line of infantry. The road to Kars was cumbered with ox-waggons, baggage, mules, and what was supposed to be their escort. All were running at full speed. The oxen galloped like horses. The mules cartered madly; and often when their burdens slipped from their backs, the frightened conductors went on, not daring to lose time in picking up their charge. The panic was complete. A mile farther on was a line of infantry with levelled rifles, threatening all runaways; and, as I myself saw, firing repeatedly on those who sought to get off by a side movement. It was with the greatest difficulty I got through this second line.

As I neared Kars the guns of the lower forts were firing on

bands of fugitive cavalry. At first I believed it was on adventurous Cossacks, and my belief was strengthened on seeing sabres flashing in the setting sun, plied amid the hurrying crowd. The idea crossed my mind that the confused column of fugitives had been assailed by the enemy's cavalry. My field-glass, however, showed me the red fizzes of the cavaliers, and I rode on a hundred paces, and was abreast with the cavalry. A revolver was thrust into my face, and I was commanded to turn again to the field of battle. It was the Colonel Hussein Bey who thus threatened me. He is a man of considerable animal courage, if I can believe the stories which reach me, but on this occasion seemed to have lost his head altogether. "Colonel," I said in French, "don't you know me? I am an Englishman and a newspaper correspondent." "I don't care who you are, it is perfectly equal to me," he said, "turn, or I blow your brains out." A dozen bayonets were at my breast, as many soldiers struck my horse with their musket butts. Of course I turned. It was not a time for explanation. Still, I turned again, and remembering that Hussein Bey had received English hospitality for seven years, I added, "Colonel, you will have reason to remember this. Your coward troops are flying before the Russians, and you wish to force me back into the panic stricken crowd." Same answer as before—and, knowing from hearsay the temper of the man, I said no more, but went on into the dire tumult where Kurd lancer and Arab cavalry were mixed together in hopeless confusion. An officer, a major, came dashing by carrying despatches. He was one of Mukhtar Pacha's aides de camp. I appealed to him. A few explanatory words followed with the colonel. 'Pass, English correspondent,' he said, "one of those people who come to earn money in our country." Some bitter words rose to my lips, but in view of the situation I held my tongue and rode on towards Kars. At the gate was a double guard. "No one enters here," was the word. "Where is the Pacha?" I demanded furiously, utterly worn out with imbecile Turkish foolery. The word Pacha is enough to bring most Moslems to their knees, and I was shown into a neighbouring fort, where a half blind old man, who scurily looked at me, told me I might go. Colonel Hussein Bey, five minutes after our meeting, fled for his life. When he bulled me he had no idea the Russian battalions were so near.

The confusion within Kars was indescribable. I believe that if the enemy had assaulted at that moment the town was his without even the semblance of a struggle. A heavy slumber, consequent on the weary watching of preceding nights, fol-

lowed. At dawn I was on foot. Patrols lined the narrow streets, seeking to collect the scattered soldiery. The Marshal dared not show himself in the streets. Some even said he was killed. By midday I had made up my mind. It was evident that Kars was about to be besieged, and that not a moment was to be lost if I wished to escape. Long before daybreak on the following morning I was on my way, accompanied by my old companion, M. Le May, of the *Paris Temps*. Before I leave Kars I must mention the parting words of Dr. Casson, who remained behind to take care of his sick colleague. "Will you," he said, "thank the Stafford House Committee for their aid?—but I wish you to say that the supplies sent by Colonel Loyd-Lindsay were by far the most practical and best selected of any I have received." The doctor seemed to take the idea of the siege lightly enough. He had something to do, and that seemed for him an all-sufficing reason. For just the same reason, and because a blockade in Kars would have left me with all the news for myself, and without occupation for the readers of the *Daily News*, I resolved on an immediate retreat. I chose a trusty Moslem guide, who looked upon every Russian as a son of Sheitan. "On my head and my eyes be it," he said, "if I do not bring you through the Russian lines." Before daylight, away over the hills towards the opening of the Olti valley. Every kilometre the anxious question was heard, "Have you met the Cossacks?" Answer—"There is cavalry ahead, we don't know what they are." Three hours' ride and a long gorge opens away towards the flat of the Kars valley. Horsemen dot the plain. "Cossacks!" every one exclaimed, and we hurry away, *ventre à terre*, hotly pursued. Three men are hard at my heels. Seeing the crescents glittering on the pursuers' housings, "Selam alik," I said, turning rein. "Ou alikoum el Selam," was the reply. They were Circassians, as much on the look-out for the Russians as myself. To say that we were fatigued would be nought. For fourteen hours and a half we toiled over rocky summits, for we dared not go down into the plain below. I made the last couple of miles on foot, amid a storm of thunder and sleet and rain. I staggered into the village of Bashkoi, beyond the village of Hadja Kaké. The latter is the important village of the district, but we dare not halt there for fear of the Cossacks, who, the villagers told us, were sure to come that evening for forage. I was announced in the village as the "English Pacha," and the best hovel of the place was put at my disposal. The poor Kurd villagers (who, by the way, under other circumstances, would have complacently cut one's throat) swarmed round me for protection and information. I was

tired to death with my fourteen hours ride, but I managed by the light of the blazing fire logs to indite the copy from which this letter is written. The pen had dropped from my hand, I was utterly overcome with weariness, when loud noises were heard outside. Every one was afoot grasping his arms. My impression was that we were surprised by the enemy's cavalry. I rushed towards the door. Judge of my surprise—I almost upset Mukhtar Pacha himself. Behind him stalked General Sir Arnold Kemball, as grave as usual. 'What you here?' the Marshal said. "Your Excellency," I replied, "I am a fugitive, before the bad weather and the fortune of war." The night was ghloral. A great fire of pine logs from the Soghanli Daghl blazed on the primitive hearth. How strange was that night. Some cold meat was produced and a kettle of tea was made. A general silence pervaded the *oda*. No one wished to be the first to speak. It was the respect one naturally pays to misfortune. Mukhtar Pacha turned to me abruptly and said, "What do you think of the enemy's artillery fire during the battle?" "Excellency, I said and I felt a little shy about giving my true opinion, "I think the Russian artillery fire was very good indeed." "Yes," said the Marshal, "that was the grand point where they beat us. It was the old story of France and Prussia. Two days before the battle I sent spies into the Russian camp. They told me that one hundred and thirty young officers had arrived. I don't know to what nationality they belonged but to them I attribute the excellence of the fire which beat us." The Marshal paused, and then with a smile he said to me, "This is the second time you have seen me beaten. You remember Verbitza?" I certainly did remember Verbitza, in Herzegovina when the Montenegrins almost destroyed the Turkish army. "Excellency, I ventured to ask "what may be our losses in the late fight?" The Marshal replied immediately, "We have lost twelve thousand prisoners, the loss in killed and wounded I don't know. Since then I have learned our losses. Over twelve thousand infantry prisoners five thousand killed and wounded. Twenty five guns captured, with seven Pachas, named as follows.—Hadji Rechid Pacha, commanding 1st Division. Hassan Pacha Chief of Staff, Omer Pacha, General of Division 3rd Division, Shefkhet Pacha commanding 2nd Division, Nadjeb Pacha, General of Brigade, Mustapha Pacha, Division General, Omer Pacha, Hungarian Brigade General. At dawn we continued our dreary retreat over the dark mountain slopes, where the poor wearied soldiers had slept all night long amid the wet grass. Two thousand and eight hundred men constituted the remnant of the

army of Kars. Eleven thousand men had been left at Kars, with the few field pieces remaining; and we were retiring with what was left of the army in the field, dragging ten mountain guns over the muddy ways. I left Mukhtar Pacha with his scanty force on the slopes of the Soghanli Dagħ. He seemed to hope to be able to effect a junction with Ismail Pacha coming from Bayazid. Meantime, all is panic here. The waggons for Trebizond are so laden with fugitive women that no place is left for men.

- ERZEROUH, *November 3rd*.—I am not a Turk, and yet I can't help echoing the talk of a good many Mussulmans here. "Why were we defeated at Aladja?" they ask. That, I take it, is a question few could answer, perhaps not even the Commander-in-Chief. I know the General intimately. He excuses his want of success by the runaway conduct of his soldiers. "I could see no reason for their flight," he said to me on the memorable evening when, at the village of Bashkoi, we sat together all the night long. Yet it seems pretty simple. The Russians were numerous; our flank was turned; and nothing remained but retreat. For me, as well as for many other spectators, the question was why the retreat was commenced only at ten o'clock p.m. And then, why were the baggage and artillery horses sent away? One would have said, under such peculiar circumstances as surrounded that total defeat, why not send off that which was most precious, the army first, and afterwards the sacks of corn of the *Idaret* (Commissariat). It matters but little now why all this was not done. There are other considerations still more important. I have already described the fight as I saw it, standing side by side with the Commander-in-Chief; and afterwards as I saw it from a point which, from prudential reasons, I thought it best to occupy, when the critical moment had arrived, and when nothing but desperation could have retained a general on such ground as Mukhtar Pacha occupied that day. Now that all is comparatively over, and that the Russians are at the very gates of Erzeroum, people begin to find fault with Ghazi (Victorious) Mukhtar Pacha. They ask why, during the decisive combat, were the battalions of our army left behind on the summit of Aladja. Why did we lose seven generals and forty-two pieces of artillery—not twenty-five, as I wrote in my last letter, not wishing to exceed the possible loss? All this is incomprehensible for the moment. The fact remains, that of an army of eighty-five battalions and some seventy-two guns, we have only straggling, disorganized troops and stray cannon. No one

can say what was the idea of the Commander in Chief. It is to be hoped he had an idea at present however, all is obscure. Together with the remnant of the army, 2,800 men and ten mountain guns we fled from Kars. I left the General at Yenikoi a village not far from the celebrated field of Khorumdusi. It was a sad wet day. The long white fog clouds veiled the surrounding hills, and the wretched, barefooted soldiers drenched to the skin came straggling in no one knowing where to go for headquarters. The Russians might have been close on our heels for aught any one knew to the contrary and yet the Turkish troops were *fele mele* in the village without an idea of defensive preparations. It didn't matter much, perhaps. Two thousand eight hundred men more or less couldn't be of great importance in such a struggle.

I found the Marshal occupying my old quarters in the Konak or principal house of the village. He was tranquil and composed as ever. The idea of *Kismet* never deserted him. I came to ask an order for some house in which I could remain for a couple of hours to dry my soaked garments and partake of a little food. The troops filled nearly every available hovel and I was more than delighted when an aide de camp found me a kind of hay loft where I could eat the thick sour milk and leathery bread which was the only food obtainable. Knowing the free and the inhabitants had hidden away eatables save that which they food. It was three o'clock in the afternoon as I mounted my horse and down pour of rain. General Sir Arnold Kembell and his aide de camp rode by telling me they were en route for a village twenty miles farther on. Two hours weary stumbling over mountain gullies and along the banks of a flooded river brought me to the village of Kara Urgun. Not a soul was left in the place and amid the falling shades of night I pushed on to Zevin. There every one was packing up and I was glad to find shelter in a kind of aboriginal hut and luxuriate on a supper of sour milk and honeycomb. Then two days ride to Lazeroum. Meantime Mukhtar Pasha retained his position at Yenikoi sending two aides de camp to discover the whereabouts of Ismail Pasha retreating from Bayazid. They brought back word that the latter General who on the 24th had left of Zaidikan was menaced by a considerable Russian force coming from the north. A slight encounter took place, and Ismail succeeded in reaching Kuprikoi uniting his eight thousand men with the three battalions at that place. On the 28th, Mukhtar, ascertaining that the Russians were advancing

in force over the plateau of Khorumdusi, retreated with all his force to the plain of Hassan Kaleh. The same night his rear-guard was assailed, and he was forced to fall back on the position of Deve-Boyun (the Camel's-neck Defile), the last line covering Erzeroum. On the morning of the 29th the Russians were camped in the plain at the village of Khoredjuka, within cannon-shot of the guns of position in the Turkish redoubts. Only yesterday I counted their tents, and saw the Cossacks roving over the plain within three hours' march of Erzeroum.

At the commencement of the campaign I gave a *résumé* of the Turkish lines of defence. To show the present situation I recapitulate briefly. After Kars and its positions further east—those of Aladjä, the scene of the terrible fighting and defeat on the 15th—come three distinct positions, where an army can make head against considerably superior forces—Khorumdusi (the scene of Mukhtar's victory), a plateau adjoining the village of Zevin, and two long days' march from Erzeroum, the lines of Kuprikoi, commanding the junction of the Bayazid, Kars, and Erzeroum roads, and the Deve-Boyun heights covering the last pass leading to the capital of Armenia. We were driven from Aladjä; we fled past Khorumdusi, and we abandoned Kuprikoi for want of sufficient men to defend it. The enemy is at the very gates of Erzeroum. Deve-Boyun once lost, Erzeroum must soon go with it. The population of the town, Mussulmans as well as Christians, say plainly they don't want a bombardment, and will make no defence. The army, such as it is, some fifteen thousand demoralized soldiers, with a crowd of motley Bashi-Bazouks from Bayazid and Toprakaleh, cannot shut itself up here. That would be to leave the whole of Armenia in the invaders' hands, and to entail its own inevitable surrender. Hence the energy with which the all-important pass is being fortified. The one spare field battery has been sent from Erzeroum, and is being distributed among the different redoubts. Some batteries of mountain guns make a fair show at advanced points, and the hill-sides are being furrowed with intrenchments. The pass of Deve-Boyun is a narrow valley, leading due east from Erzeroum to the wide plain of Hassan Kaleh, the latter an old-fashioned Turkish town, near which are the fountains of the Araxes. The pass is skirted by rounded hills, and near its eastern extremity is crossed by a ridge which constitutes the second line of defence. Then comes a deep, precipitous ravine, and immediately beyond another ridge. On this is situated the headquarters of the army. It is the link between the hills which form the first and principal lines. Opposite its centre, slightly to the left,

is a long hill, crowned by a steeply bounded plateau, narrow like the hill itself. It is strongly intrenched, and forms the centre of the defence. To its right are two conical hills, somewhat oblique to the front, on which are two redoubts, armed with guns of position, and occupied by several battalions. To the left of the long hill is a rounded mamelon, projecting spur like from the lofty mountains which fringe the plain. From this mamelon long trenches extend further east, intended to secure our left flank. In front of all run two rivulets, which uniting, form one of the tributaries of the Araxes. In case of need, a large portion of the front could be inundated by blocking the course of these streams. From every point of view the line is exceedingly strong, and, unless I am much mistaken the Russians will not try to carry it by direct attack. But it has its weak points, which, to my mind, are fatal. To the north is the valley of Olti, parallel to the pass, to the south another similar valley coming from the direction of Byzid, and both debouching into the plain before Erzeroum. These valleys are separated from the plain of Hassan Kaleh by lofty mountains, at this season heavily covered with snow. By either of the valleys the enemy can turn the formidable barrier in their path and our latest intelligence informs us that they are doing so. During my visit to the positions of Deve Boyun yesterday, I had a conversation with Paizi Pacha, chief of the staff. He admitted the danger of the situation, while informing me that both these avenues of attack were occupied by our troops. "We hope too," he said "to be able to link these forces on our flank with the centre." I am afraid however, that the scanty Turkish army, fronted as it is by a formidable Russian force camped within cannon shot on the plain in front, can scarcely afford the necessary troops to guard the lateral avenues. Conscious of this weakness, we are taking measures to inundate the opening of the Olti valley at a point close to the city named Gurji Boghas, close to the village of Hundsk. The Cossacks, coming by way of Olti and Nahrman, are already reported within view of these new defences. Then again, there is the road leading from the Olti valley to Baiburt, by which, without the necessity of striking a blow, the enemy can cut our communications with Trebizond and the Black Sea coast. It is probably with a view of hindering this movement, for which a few squadrons of cavalry alone would suffice, that the long promised reinforcements, if they really exist, have, as we are told, arrested their march at Baiburt. Meantime, with our fourteen or fifteen thousand men, the sum of the united fragments of Mukhtar's and Ismail's armies, we await our

fate. In Erzeroum a panic prevails. A large number of persons refuse to open their shops, all business is at a standstill, and every day hundreds of women crowd the waggons going to Erzingan and Trebizond.

CHAPTER XX.

INVESTMENT OF PLEVNA AND FALL OF KARS.

Arrival of the Guard before Plevna—Completion of Divisions from the Reserve—General Gourko on the Orkanieh-Plevna Road—Capture of Gorny Dubnik, Teliche and Dolny Dubnik—Completion of the Investment—Osman Pacha's Position—Turkish Prisoners of War—Condition of Kars—Artillery Attack on the Fortress—Capture of Fort Hafiz Pacha—Summons to surrender—Defiant Refusal—Grand Assault on Kars—Capture of the Fortress and Garrison, Guns and Stores—Rejoicings at Plevna.

THE failure of the third attack on Plevna had convinced the Grand Duke Nicholas that he had no longer anything to hope from a repetition of those headlong front attacks upon earthworks in which, until that time, all the art of his staff had consisted, while it was only too evident that the tremendous losses sustained before Plevna were seriously affecting the *morale* of the soldiers. It was therefore resolved to call for the aid of the skilful officer of engineers who had designed the defence of Sebastopol, and also to await the arrival of the new troops who were by this time well on their way. Whether the necessity of completing the investment of Plevna was foreseen when General Todleben was sent for is uncertain, but it was recognized soon after he arrived in the camp, when also the weekly appearance of new troops promised to furnish before long the means of completing the blockade. Osman Pacha, having repulsed the last and greatest attack upon his position, showed himself anxious for the despatch of supplies and reinforcements. General Kriloff, as we have already seen, had been sent with a strong body of cavalry to guard the road from Orkhanieh to Plevna, but proved lamentably unequal to the task. On the 21st September Ahmed Hifzi Pacha set out from Orkhanieh with a convoy of fifteen battalions, a battery of eight guns,

and a long train loaded with provisions and ammunition. The train advanced slowly, but Kuloff so little understood what he had to do that it entered Plevna without the loss of a single waggon Kuloff taking credit in his report for not having lost a man in opposing its progress. A second convoy reached Osman Pacha in like manner as a third would have done had not the Roumanians interfered and captured it. An end however was soon to be put to these displays of Russian helplessness. The Guard had arrived and the ranks of the battalions which had fought during the summer had been filled up. General Gourko who since his retreat to the Shipka Pass had not been actively employed now received orders to assume the command of a strong cavalry force and to take possession of the Orkhanieh road. His arrival on the scene was the signal for activity of a most productive kind. The first intimation of his advent was the announcement that he had captured the position of Gorny Dubnik the centre of the principal Turkish defences on the Orkhanieh road. The place was strongly intrenched with a large redoubt of four hundred yards flanked by two smaller works. It was held by twelve battalions of Turks and was attacked by twenty four battalions with sixty four guns and a regiment of cavalry. The fighting lasted from six A.M. to six P.M. when the Turks hoisted the white flag five of their battalions escaped to Plevna while seven surrendered. This success cost the Russians 154 officers and 1000 men. On the same day a division of the Guards sent against Teliche a fortified position west of Gorny Dubnik suffered a severe repulse. Teliche however was captured on the 29th of October when five battalions surrendered after a feeble resistance. On the 1st of November, Dolny Dubnik east of Gorny Dubnik was taken. It was held by 5000 Turks under a Pacha and was fairly intrenched but when General Gourko advanced against it with a division and a half and sixty four guns and opened a cannonade, followed by rifle firing the Turks leaving the road to Plevna open to them abandoned the place. General Gourko not losing a man. With the occupation of Dolny Dubnik the road from Plevna to Sofia through Orkhanieh was closed, and the investment of Plevna was

regarded as complete. The Russian cavalry now made excursions over a large extent of country south of Plevna, capturing the 'Turks' supplies, who since the loss of the road to Plevna had been counting on an army of relief to be formed at Orkhanieh. They took Teteven, near Orkhanieh, and Vratza, and then Etropol, within ten miles of Orkhanieh itself. The following letters relate to these transactions :—

† BUCHAREST, *October 26th*.—The news has just been received here of the fight on the Sofia road. The Turks had fortified a position there between Gorny Dubnik and Teliche, and it was here, it will be remembered, that General Kriloff tried to stop Chefket Pacha's convoy by attacking a fortified position with cavalry and artillery instead of the convoy itself. The Turks have evidently been trying to reopen their communications by establishing a number of small forts along the Sofia road. This was one of them, and as it was probably too near the Russian line to be convenient they took it, as they will undoubtedly take any others there may be this side of the Balkans. The Russians have 3,000 prisoners, one regiment of cavalry, and four guns. The fighting, it is said, was hard, and the Russian losses considerable.

A Russian officer just returned from the positions before Plevna gives me the following account of affairs there. It is untrue that the Turks have succeeded in getting any supplies of provisions into Plevna lately. No convoy has succeeded in getting through since about the time that General Gourko took command of the cavalry. The investment of Plevna has been complete now for about a week; that is, an investment with the aid of infantry. As fast as the soldiers of the Imperial Guard arrived they took up their position on the Russian left, where General Skobelev stands with the 16th Division, continuing the line of investment over the Loftcha road, on to the Sofia road, and further round as fast as the troops arrived.

There is a large force of infantry on and near this road, and the line is continued from here to the Roumanian right by the Russian and Roumanian cavalry under the command of General Gourko. The investment is therefore complete, and it is evident from the manner in which it has been done, and from so much infantry being sent behind Plevna, that the Russian plan looks farther than merely obliging Osman Pacha to withdraw from Plevna. In fact, if it were merely a question of stopping supplies, a large force of cavalry under General Gourko would have sufficed. It is true he could not

have prevented the arrival of reinforcements, but with his artillery he could always smash the waggons, kill the horses of the train, and destroy the supplies, even if he could not capture them. Infantry was, therefore, not absolutely necessary on the other side of Plevna, and that such a strong force has been sent seems to point to the intention of the Russians not only to starve out Osman Pacha, but to cut off his retreat likewise. It is impossible to ascertain for exactly how long Plevna is provisioned, and it is probable that the Turks themselves do not know, but it is evident that, unless their supplies are sufficient for the whole winter, Ghazi Osman Pacha will soon be in a most critical position, one resembling somewhat that of Bazaine at Metz. We may suppose that Osman will show more patriotism, more generalship, and especially more tenacity than Bazaine, but it is evident that unless he has a much larger supply of provisions than is believed, he will soon be in a bad way.

The Russians are receiving reinforcements every day, and there is every appearance that they intend to surround Plevna as the Germans did Paris with a series of works, through which Osman will find as much difficulty in breaking as General Trochu did with the German intrenchments around Paris. Osman will have to fight his way out or surrender sooner or later, for the Russians will soon have enough troops to complete the investment by infantry, and make a circle of resistance as solid as that of the Germans around Paris. The only question is for how long is Osman Pacha supplied with provisions. As the Turks have had all summer in which to store up provisions in Plevna, there is really no good reason, except Turkish improvidence, why they should not have enough to last them until next spring, but there is every reason to believe that they have not so much. My informant thinks that the fact of the Turks having sent fifteen or twenty thousand men as reinforcements into Plevna some weeks ago, is evidence that they do not fear running short of supplies. But this by no means follows. In the first place, the reinforcements escorted large convoys of supplies, which would not have got through without an escort. Then, besides, the Turks could not know that a complete investment would be attempted, and may have hoped to prevent it. The arrival of the reinforcements, therefore, is no proof that there are plenty of provisions in Plevna. The appearances are that Osman will attempt to force out his way through the Russian lines sooner or later, and that the attempt will end in a disaster as complete as that of Mukhtar Pacha.

I must say, now, that the question of a second campaign is reso-

lutely faced, the prospect is more hopeful for the Russians than at any time since General Krüdener's defeat in July.

† BUCHAREST, *October 28th*.—The battle at Gorny Dubnik seems to have been a more serious affair as regards fighting than I could at first have supposed. When General Kriloff was there there was only a small earthwork, which the Turks appeared to have constructed in haste as a sufficient obstacle to cavalry, but one that would not have stopped a strong force more than a few minutes. The Turks must have strengthened and reinforced it since then. It is situated near the road in the middle of a plain, on a very slight eminence, and possesses no natural advantages of position. As the Turks have established a line of these posts to keep open the road, they cannot put a large number of troops in any one of them without weakening the army in Plevna. They probably had five or six thousand men here, yet the Russians acknowledge a loss of twenty-five hundred men, which shows the terrible effects of breech-loading arms properly handled. Nevertheless the Russians took it, and as they surrounded the place before attacking it no part of the garrison could escape. All were either killed or taken prisoners.

As the Russians report that two thousand prisoners were taken, the Turkish loss would probably be between three and four thousand killed. The result of the affair is to show that the Turks cannot keep the road open by this system of small detached forts. There has been a rumour here that the Turks have recaptured part of the positions; but this I do not credit. The Turks could not have a large force near there, and, as there are two divisions of the Guard over the River Vid, it is not likely that the Turks could have recaptured anything from them.

† BOGOT, *November 4th*.—The belief here that Plevna cannot hold out more than a few days longer is very strong. No supplies have reached the place for more than a month, and it is invested by a circle of earthworks manned by forces that are growing stronger every day with the arrival of troops from Russia.

The question now is, What will Osman Pacha do? It is pretty certain that he has no great amount of supplies, that his troops are suffering severe privations from hunger and cold, and that much depression and discontent prevail is evident from the number of deserters who come in daily. The easy surrender of Teliche after five hours of artillery fire is an ominous event which points to the same conclusion—that is, a scarcity of

provisions. They probably never thought that the Russians could completely invest Plevna, or only thought so lately, as was shown by their feeble attempt to keep open communications by building a line of small detached forts. Osman Pacha has no hope of relief from outside, and if he is as short of supplies as is believed here, he must ere long choose between surrendering at discretion or cutting his way through the Russian lines.

The Russians seem to think he will surrender, but I for my part have no doubt he will attempt to cut his way out. Whichever he chooses, the result will be a disaster to the Turkish arms. He can undoubtedly succeed in escaping with part of his army if he does not allow his troops to become too much weakened by hunger before making the attempt, but he will lose his artillery, which may not after all be worth much, as a great deal of it is disabled, and will lose more than half his army. His effective is now estimated at 45 000 men. After deducting for losses and sickness, if he reached Sofia with 20,000 he would be lucky, for it should be remembered that the Russians hold not only one point on the Sofia road but the whole road up to the summit of the Orkhanieh Pass, which is practicable, it seems, for an army. He will have to break through three lines of intrenchments, and although his troops are good in defending trenches, they are not so good in attacking them. If the Turks in trenches can repulse the Russians, the latter can much more easily repulse the Turks under the same circumstances.

The Russian lines are completely connected by a telegraph encircling the place, so that the Russians can concentrate immediately upon the point of the circle that is attacked. This is further facilitated by the peculiarity of the ground, which enables the Russians to see every part of the Turkish positions from some point in the Russian lines. Any concentration of the Turkish troops can therefore be seen and the numbers estimated, unless such concentration be made at night. Even then the exact numbers could be seen at daylight, as soon as the movement began, so that it is impossible for Osman Pacha to gain time by making feints. He will simply have to gather his troops together during the night, and throw them in a mass upon some point of the Russian lines at daylight, and get through. The result can hardly be less than disastrous, though less so, perhaps, than capitulation.

Much speculation is indulged in as to the direction in which Osman Pacha will try to break through. It seems more than likely he will attempt it by the Widdin road, where the

Russian line is weakest; but although this appears his greatest chance of success; perhaps that success, if attained, would be of little use; for while one half of the Russian army pursued him, the other half could cross the Balkans, and crush Chefket's small force at Sofia. Osman Pacha's object upon getting out should be to effect a junction with either Chefket, Reouf, or Suleiman, which would be impossible if he broke through on the Widdin side. The Sofia road and the line from the Loftcha road are held by the Guard. The Loftcha road is held by Skobeleff, on ground which he has fought over twice. The passage cannot be effected except by the most desperate fighting and the most fearful losses. Should he attempt on the east to effect a junction with Suleiman, he would, supposing he succeeded in breaking through the Russian lines and earthworks, still have with the remnant of his army to meet the Army of the Jantra with the Grand Duke Nicholas on his back. Everything considered, I think Osman Pacha's chances are bad, unless he has three or four months' supply of provisions. Nevertheless, skill and energy might do wonders, if seconded by incapacity and stupidity on the other side. At any rate, the result of this Plevna campaign must be a great military event, and one of the highest interest. The weather is fairly good. There is rain and sunshine every day. The sky is clear nearly every night; the weather is warm; the roads are moderately good. Three days of rain or three days of sunshine would make them very bad or very good. There has been ten days of cold weather, during which the troops suffered severely, but now they are not badly off. The season of sickness has not yet begun, nor will it until the weather finally breaks up. This may not be until the first of December. Even then, should we be favoured by extreme cold and snow instead of rain, the health of the army would not suffer much.

The Russian reserve system seems to be working very well. General Skobeleff tells me his division, which suffered so severely in Krüdener's defeat, and which also lost heavily at Pelisat and in the last Plevna affair, numbers 11,500 men. Little is doing here in the way of bombardment. Three or four times only during the day a great crash breaks against the sky, and comes rolling back to us in muffled thunder. It is caused by one hundred to three hundred guns speaking in unison, and concentrated upon a single spot. General Todleben has had all the distances divided into small sections. There are about four hundred guns in position around Plevna. From one hundred to all the four hundred can be concen-

trated on any point of the Turkish positions, and whenever the Turkish reserves or any masses of troops can be detected anywhere, the guns are directed upon that spot, and a simultaneous fire is ordered by telegraph. For two or three hundred shells to fall in a small space, within a few seconds of each other, is fearful. This is the only way modern artillery can be made effective. The fire is sometimes concentrated on the redoubts, sometimes on the town in the same way. Had the artillery been handled in this way when assaulting the redoubts, it would have been useful. As no assault is intended now, it does little good, except when masses of troops are caught.

The Emperor arrived here yesterday, and went to Dornj Dubnik, on the Sofia road, accompanied by the Grand Duke Nicholas. They are to return to-morrow.

+ *BOGOR, November 4th, Evening*—Three detachments of prisoners passed through here to-day, counting in all perhaps 5,000 men. They were captured at the recent engagement on the Sofia road. One batch of officers came under a special guard, and bivouacked here for the night. There are 250 of them, including some who are said to be pachas, and one Englishman, who insists that he is a surgeon, but who is generally believed to have been an officer. His name I could not learn. Many of the officers are mounted. Some have pack horses, with quantities of effects. All are well dressed, and have no lack of warm clothing. They have plenty of money, which they spend freely for bread and tobacco, and seem on the whole, to be gratified with their fortune, which has brought them into the hands of the Russians. The soldiers are comfortably clothed, and appear well fed and healthy. These prisoners will be sent to Sistova, as was the batch of 3,000 which passed here two or three days ago. A very small escort accompanies them—almost ridiculously small, in fact—but they are quiet, and manifest no disposition to cause trouble.

+ *DOLNA DUBNIK, November 6th*—The Turks abandoned this place, lost the position they held on the Sofia road, and retreated into Plevna without firing a shot. The Russians were making dispositions to surround and capture the place as they did at Gornj Dubnik and Tichche. The Turks, seeing this, evacuated it at midnight. When the Russians advanced the next morning they did not find a soul.

It was the best thing the Turks could do, as it was evident the position could not be held. The capture of this place has enabled the Russians to shorten their line of investment con-

siderably. Their line has now been drawn right round the Turkish works everywhere, and the investment is more complete and effective than I had thought, as every part is occupied by infantry, no part being left to cavalry. From Grivica round to the Loftcha road the line is just where it was at the moment of giving the assault at the last attack on Plevna. The artillery occupies the ridge before Radisovo, with the guns extended down the line towards the Loftcha road to not more than a mile from Plevna. On the Loftcha road General Skobelev is not as far advanced as he was at the time he made his assault. The Turks, taking advantage of the moment after the battle when the Russians had withdrawn, and warned that they were not invulnerable here, have constructed four new redoubts, so that Skobelev now, instead of three redoubts, has seven before him. When Skobelev first attacked here, when Krüdener was defeated, he found no defences at all, and he entered Plevna but with only one battalion. His line is now considerably in front of a village called Brestovec. From here the line extends to the Vid. It then crosses the Sofia road about a mile from the bridge over the Vid. From here it passes parallel to the river until just below Opanes, where it again crosses the Vid, and curves round to the Grivica redoubt, about a mile in front of Grivica. The Russian line of investment is thirty miles long. The Turkish position measures from the Grivica redoubt to the bridge over the Vid eight miles; from the Krishine redoubt to the Bukova redoubt is about five miles. The line is of an irregular, oval shape, with a circumference of about twenty miles.

With the force the Russians have here now, 120,000 men, they can fill two lines of continuous trenches around the whole line of investment as full as it is convenient for men to lie in trenches. It will be seen, therefore, that Osman Pacha is surrounded by a circle which it will not be easy to break through. As to the supply of provisions, accounts continue to be contradictory, but since my last telegram a herd of about five or six thousand head of cattle, whose existence was not known before, has been discovered, by having been driven out to feed on the hills. Other indications point to the probability that Osman may hold out thirty or forty days yet, though not longer. His army is already on short rations, however. Ten soldiers receive two and a half pounds of meat daily between them, and the supply of corn and flour is not thought to be great. At any rate, whether Osman has supplies for one month or for three, the result must be the same in the end. He will have to surrender or cut his way out,

either of which will be such a disaster for the Turkish aims that Russia will be enabled to bring the war to a rapid conclusion. Turkey can never raise such another army as that of Osman Pacha and the loss of this army is now only a question of some weeks more or less. The Russians will stay here till Plevna falls and we think we already see the beginning of the end.

The soldiers have built for themselves very comfortable huts all along the line of positions and although they will undoubtedly suffer in case of a rainy winter they will be able to keep up the investment with ease. As to supplies the army on the west side of the Víd can live on the country between the Danube and the Balkans nearly up to the Servian frontier by means of their cavalry. The country is rich in Indian corn, wheat, barley, hay and straw. On the other side they will be supplied from Roumania and this can be done with ease. Everything considered the Russian prospects are brighter than they have been since last July and everybody feels it. The change of feeling since I was here last is very great. Much of this cheerfulness is I believe owing to the fact that such men as Todleben, Gourko, Skobelev and Imeretinski have come to the front and although not forming part of the staff have active parts in the direction of the war. But the great fact is that Osman is caught in his own net and cannot escape.

The inherent weakness of an army such as the Turkish that can only act on the defensive now becomes glaringly evident. If Osman's army could manœuvre on the field of battle if it had discipline, good officers, tactical education enabling Osman to handle it as an army should be handled, he would not undoubtedly allow his communications to be cut and himself to be shut up like a monster spider in his own web. He would have retired from Plevna before it was too late, have refused battle against superior numbers, but have hovered on the Russian right flank ready to strike at a favourable moment—a continual menace to the Russian communications. The enemy could never cross the Balkans as long as this army remained anywhere between Plevna and Widdin and with its back to the Balkans it could always have defied attack as easily as at Plevna. Such might have been the development of the campaign if Osman Pacha's army were like a European one capable of acting on the offensive, of manœuvring in the open country, of executing rapid movements, of striking swift heavy blows. As it is his troops can only sit in the trenches and shoot until they are all starved out like wild beasts.

By the beginning of November the Russian army had not only been joined by all the new corps which had been summoned from Russia, but all the battalions before Plevna had been brought up to their full strength. Their girdle of investment was tightened by the Russians whenever any ground was to be gained. The following letter describes a struggle which grew out of a successful attempt in this direction made by General Skobeleff:—

† GENERAL SKOBELLEFF'S HEADQUARTERS, BRESTOVEC, LOFTCHA ROAD, *November 10th.*—The monotony of the last few days has at last been broken by an affair which, although not of very great importance, has nevertheless kept us employed for the last twenty-four hours. As might be expected, the break in the monotony of our existence came from Skobeleff, who is one of those restless spirits that cannot keep quiet. However, he had very good cause for action in the present case. I have already described the Russian line of investment, mentioning with the rest Skobeleff occupying his old positions on the Loftcha road. This is the only point on the line where the Russians do not hold the same ground as at the moment of the assault. After the battle of Plevna it was thought unsafe to remain here, and Skobeleff was ordered to fall back on Tucenica, completely abandoning the Loftcha road, and placing an impassable ravine, which runs parallel to the road about a quarter of a mile distant from it, between him and the Turks. When he again advanced to occupy his old positions he found, as I have already stated, that the Turks had considerably advanced theirs, and had constructed four new redoubts. He succeeded, however, in occupying Brestovec, on the left of the road, and in constructing a redoubt in front and on the left of the village, and the line of trenches across the road to the ravine already mentioned. The Brestovec redoubt is just opposite the Turkish Krishine redoubt, from which it is distant about 1,300 yards. But this Brestovec redoubt forms a kind of angle projecting into the Turkish lines, and was somewhat exposed and dangerous. It became necessary to strengthen the Russian line. This could be done by seizing the small wooded hill immediately in front of the right wing between the Loftcha road and the ravine already spoken of.

It was most unfortunate for the Russians that these positions were ever abandoned, for they are about as high as the Krishine redoubt, they completely command Plevna, and the two

redoubts captured by Skobelev in the last affair, and fortified, would have rendered the Russian positions here much stronger than they can now be made. The Turks have now constructed a strong redoubt on the summit of the hill between the Krishine redoubt and the Loftcha road, the very spot where Skobelev planted two batteries during the last affair. It was not the hill with the redoubt which Skobelev resolved to capture, but one between the Loftcha road and the ravine. It was defended by trenches, and held by about fourteen sappers perhaps 7,000 men, though Todleben believed there were a great many more, as the position was most important. The combined movement was arranged with General Gourko, who was to open fire all along the line, and likewise advance and occupy the position in front of him towards the bridge over the Vid, in order to shorten his line likewise. The weather, which for several days had been very fine, became foggy last night, and a thick heavy fog hung over us all day. — — — — — day we last attacked so cold. It was so feet

The attack was fixed for five o'clock. By that time it was so dark that nothing could be seen more than five feet off. Skobelev reviewed his troops that were destined for the attack—the battalion of sharpshooters. He then got down from his horse, went about among the men, talked to them, told them, especially the under-officers, just what they were to do, and finished by informing them he would lead the assault in person. This regiment, I may remark, was one which attacked and carried these same heights during the last affair of Plevna on the second day of the bombardment. The regiment, having taken these heights, slipped out of the hands of its officers, and pursued the Turks to the foot of the glacis of the redoubt afterwards captured by Skobelev, with the result that two thirds of the regiment were destroyed. The regiment is now full again with reserves that have come up. It was the recollection of this event that decided Skobelev to lead the attack himself. It was important that the men should be stopped at the right moment and at the right place, and that the intrenchments which he intended to throw up should be properly laid, as a little mistake easily made might end disastrously. It was not, therefore, mere bravado which made him decide to lead the assault himself.

At half-past four the moment arrived — — — — —

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vigilance that day. On the approach of darkness the roar of eighty guns was heard that vomited splashes of flame upon the murky fog, and then were silent. Then came the scream of eighty shells seeking their destination in the obscurity. Then there was the crash of the infantry fire along the whole line except on the point of the attack, for it was Skobelev's design to use the fog for cover and take the Turks by surprise. The infantry fire rolled along in front of Brestovec, where I had taken my station, and soon the bullets began singing overhead, telling that the Turks were replying; but we could hear as yet little firing on the right wing, where the attack was to take place. Finally, after about a quarter of an hour, there were two or three volleys in this direction, followed by a Russian shout, and we knew the position was carried.

As it turned out, the Turks were surprised, and did not discover the approach of the Russians until they were within one hundred yards. By the time they had seized their arms and fired two rounds, the Russians were on them with the bayonet, and it was all over. In a moment those who did not fly were bayoneted. The attack was led by two companies of sharpshooters, followed closely by the 9th Battalion and the Vladimirsky regiment. Every man was provided with a shovel, and immediately began making trenches, as indicated by Skobelev. In a very few minutes they were under cover from a heavy but ill-directed fire poured into them from the next hill, not distant more than 250 yards. Skobelev stayed until about ten o'clock, when he thought the men had made the place secure, and returned to Brestovec to supper. He had scarcely washed when the fire broke out again with fury on the right flank. Skobelev mounted again, disappeared in the darkness and fog, and did not return till this morning. He found the Turks making a desperate attempt to recapture the position, and arrived on the ground in the nick of time, as some confusion had ensued, for the reserves, who lost their way in the fog, coming in the wrong direction, got fired into from their own side. There was also a report that Skobelev was killed, which discouraged the troops. He arrived in the middle of the Turkish assault, one fellow having leaped into the trench with the cry of "Allah!" where he was bayoneted. The attack was repulsed, but the Turks made a second and third one, and each time were driven back with ease.

The position, if not taken within the next twenty-four hours, may be considered secure. The Russian loss was comparatively small, only 250 killed and wounded, among whom were two or three officers, one being Captain Dombrowsky, of the sharpshooters, of whom Skobelev speaks in the highest terms.

The Turkish loss, of course, was much heavier, as the Russians were under cover almost immediately on getting possession of the hill, and lost less than a hundred in the assault itself. The weather is fine again to day.

BUCHAREST, *November 11th, Night*—A Russian success is reported here to day—the occupation of Vratza by General Gouko. This victory is evidently of some importance. Vratza or Vraca as spelt on the Austrian map is situated some fifty kilometres west of Plevna and although only occupied by 1500 Turks mostly irregulars, still formed a considerable depot of ammunition and provisions which I hear, are now safely in the hands of the Russians. The loss on the Russian side is reported small.

+ HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL SKOBELEFF BRESTOVFC, *November 10th*—This village has been in Russian hands only three or four days and even now is in the ragged edge of the Turkish infantry fire from the rifle pits in front of the Krishine redoubt which crowns the summit of the smooth hill to the north. Stry shells make the empty houses re-echo with a musical prolongation of the noise of the whizzing bits, and the singing of the Peribody Martini bullets is heard at short intervals day and night through. The village is not an agreeable place of residence for it occupies a little valley only a few hundred yards from the Turkish works and the dip seems to be just at the right angle to pick up all the odd bits of lead and iron that come anywhere in this direction. The casualties are perhaps more numerous here than in the trenches on account of the peculiar conformation of the ground but, then to be anywhere here in the neighbourhood of General Skobeleff is always to be in dangerous quarters. The trenches run along the northern edge of the village behind the garden hedges, and out across the open slope to the left, into a battery on the hill directly opposite the Krishine redoubt. The former position was back on the Loftcha road but a young officer of the 16th Division saw a good opportunity of flanking the Turks who held this point three or four days ago, and with a hundred men drove them out of the place, and occupied their lines himself. This village, by the way, is just where the village of Krishine is marked on the Austrian map a half mile north west of the hill where the Loftcha road descends into the valley towards Plevna. This new position of General Skobeleff not only brings him nearer to the Turks, but shortens the line of investment materially. There is a certain green hill to the north of the line, thinly wooded and not over five hundred paces from the battery on the Loftcha road,

on the slope of this hill has been stationed the advanced picquets of the Turks, who have made it at times decidedly uncomfortable for passers between the battery and this village, and have sent a multitude of compliments in this direction. General Skobeleff has been meditating for some days the capture of this territory, and it was decided to attempt the advance last evening, in conjunction with a forward movement of General Gourko on the left.

We had been basking in the warm sunshine for a day or two, and had begun to believe that it was the real Indian summer after all, but yesterday morning the sun rose pale and feeble, no warmth penetrated the thick curtain of fog that clung to the earth, and as the day advanced the mist grew more and more dense, until, by the middle of the afternoon, it was impossible to see the distance of a hundred yards. All the forenoon the troops were moving in small detachments toward the place of concentration near the Loftcha road, and everyone knew that an attack was arranged for five o'clock in the afternoon. The fog effectually concealed the hostile lines from one another, and the batteries were silent. To us who were waiting this silence was ominous, for it was broken by the muffled tramp of men and words of command as the detachments went away into the fog. At three o'clock the ragged red and yellow flag was taken from its place by the side of the door of the low mud hovel occupied by General Skobeleff, and the staff assembled to inspect the troops and to accompany the General, who was to conduct the attack in person. It was a most picturesque and romantic cavalcade that filed out of the yard and followed the young leader out to certain danger and possible death. General Skobeleff, alike heedless of cold and damp and whizzing missiles, was the only one who was not bundled up in overcoat and capuchon. He led the way through the narrow alleys of the village, mounted on a white horse—the soldiers look for the white horse as much as for their beloved commander—confident, cheerful, inspiring to look upon. Behind him a motley retinue; Circassians with long surtouts and silver-mounted harness and weapons; blonde youths already scarred and covered with decorations, correspondents in civil dress, Cossacks half hidden in their grey-coats and hoods, and in the middle of the group a picturesque Circassian on a white horse, bearing the tattered banner, quite like an old crusader, with his quaint arms and curious dress. The flag, too, is quite mediæval in appearance, and completed the illusion to perfection. It is a square silk banner, fastened to a Cossack's lance, and has on the one side the white cross of St. George,

and on the other the letters M C (Michael Skobelev), and the date 1875 in
 was carried through
 in all the hard fighting
 famous. We went on, losing our way a dozen times, but at last reached the spot where the troops were massed near an encampment of straw huts, all drawn up in order with arms in hands and with spades to intrench the ground they were about to take, stretcher bearers in a group at the rear, a suggestive but unpleasant sight, a battery of mitrailleuses bundled up like so many human beings to keep out the damp, and in front of the troops, the little body of picked men, each with his shovel his rations, and plenty of ammunition, who were to make the first rush across use the bayonet, and then throw it aside for the spade and endeavour to cover in time to resist the attack of the returning Turks.

It was a dramatic and intensely impressive scene, these square masses of earnest men every one with his eyes fixed on the face of the General, who passed before them all with the customary greeting which was answered with a will like one voice from the battalion in turn. Against the background of grey mists which had now settled down so thick that objects were not visible the length of a company front came out the forms of men and horses in exaggerated relief, and made wonderfully picturesque the groups and masses of expectant soldiers. General Skobelev dismounted and told the men just what he expected of them—that they were not to storm the works of Plevna but only to run forward and take the piece of ground they knew perfectly well in front of the road, and to hold it until they had works thrown up. He cautioned them as many were young soldiers sent out from the reserves to fill the great gaps in the ranks not to advance too far, but to mind exactly what the officers told them. He would be with them himself, and would direct the movements personally. Surely a finer lot of men never went into a fight, young, healthy, devoted, and confident, every face wore an expression that was a proof of courage and earnestness and even religious zeal. As we stood there the darkness rapidly increased, and it was nearly five o'clock as the troops moved forward at quick pace in front of the General and staff. As the men passed they all received encouraging words, and they went by smiling at the good natured chaff from the General, who called to them by name remarked on their new boots, which he said were like those of a Spanish don, and told the musicians they would play a waltz in the new redoubts on the morrow.

the perfect confidence of the soldiers, inspired by the presence of the man whom they regard as a protector, infallible leader, and beloved friend at the same time, made the success of the undertaking assured, and as they went down over the hill to the trenches, to await the opening salvo of artillery, we took our place—a little knot of non-combatants—in the trenches on the hill alongside the battery which was to give the signal for the assault. The hot breath of sixteen field pieces scorched our faces as the opening salvo shook the heavy air, then came a cheer on the right, just down in the hollow, and the singing of bullets filled the air over our heads. We were seated in the trench of the picquet line, and when the bullets began to chip off the twigs on the top of the breastwork, and plump into the earth at our feet, we began to look about us to see what we were depending on for support. Only a thin line of men were lying against the dirt, rifle in hand, anxiously trying to see some object in front to shoot at. An officer came along and extinguished all the fires, and kept cautioning and encouraging the men, ordering them to stop firing and to watch. The musketry rattled and roared in the hollow and off on the green hill on the right, and sounded like the surging of a storm. The battery alongside kept banging away, deafening us, and blinding us with the flash. In the dense fog every noise was magnified, and as the shells screamed past us and exploded with a sharp, ringing sound behind us in the village, it seemed as if they were ten times the ordinary size. The darkness was impenetrable, An officer or a couple of stretcher-bearers loomed up occasionally through the fog, and dodged and jumped into the ditch as the leaden shower came over us. Down below in the hollow we could see no flash, only from that darkness came a hot spitting of lead that made it almost certain death to face. The fog began to condense and gather on the ground, and the cold increased, and still the battle roared, and rose and fell, ceased and began again. At last it was evident from the firing that the position was taken, and we retired to the village to the music of the shells and bullets, and up to our little camp as quickly as possible, for we were anxious for men and horses. We found all safe, but tent and waggon riddled with bullets, and only one soldier's horse limping with a wound. We put the waggon in such shelter as we could easily find behind a straw stack, and awaited the next burst of battle, which we knew was sure to come. At a quarter-past ten it broke again, and the same fiendish noise and rattle went on as before, and the bullets and shells kept singing about our ears for a long half-hour, and all was silent, with an occasional cannon report, until day-

break when we were awakened by a new peal of artillery, and had the same continuous rattle of bullets among the twigs. Then we learned the details of the occupation of the ridge which have reached the public long before this by telegraph. As I write the popping of rifles is heard on the ridge for the Turks do not seem satisfied with the loss of the position and make frequent but ineffectual attempts to regain it. A visit to the ground gained showed me what they had done in the few hours of darkness. An irregular zigzag trench runs across the hill to the further side toward the Incirli ravine, where there is a square battery for the Gatling guns. Along the trenches and among the trees there is no sign of the struggle. The sights of a battle field are only horrible after the affair is over and it was a relief to find no dead man no wounded man no marks of a scuffle or a bayonet fight even on the ground where the struggle had taken place. Now we are waiting the final result and occupy our time in skirmishing about between the shelter and the fire for tea and food and spend the moments of lull in the shower of bullets in arranging for the next burst of the lead mine. The penetration of the Peabody Martini bullet is simply remarkable. At the distance of two thousand yards from the Turkish lines I have dug them out of a foot of solid earth of a threshing floor. At the distance we are now from those who hold the rifles nothing short of a thick earthwork will stop them for they skip merrily through the roofs of the houses and through the mud fences and bury themselves deep in the earth. During the fight which was just taken place I have heard for the first time the new falconets at work. In a telegram I spoke of the use of these demi cannon as I called them for want of a better word. They are simply short rifles of about 80 bore breech loading and carrying a ball heavy enough to penetrate an ordinary breastwork and kill the man behind it at 250 yards. The report sounds more like the bursting of a small shell in the lines than like a gun for it is just between the rifle and cannon report in volume. A telescopic rifle with a good marksman to use it would do more damage to the Turks than a thousand of the falconets and put a stop to

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THE GENERAL HIMSELF is asleep on a stretcher in the trenches and will not come up again until the occupation of the ridge is a settled fact and there is no more danger of the Turks retaking it. It is no wonder that the soldiers of such a general fight well.

- HEADQUARTERS, DOLNY DUBNIK, *November 16th.*—The position here remains unchanged. Since the seizure of the Green Hill by Skobelev, already described in a previous telegram, no important movement has been undertaken by the Russians. The Turks have made three attacks upon Skobelev's position on three successive nights, but were each time repulsed with heavy loss. The defence of this new position is most successful and brilliant, and the position itself is of more importance than I was at first disposed to acknowledge. Skobelev remains night after night in the trenches, and has succeeded in pushing his lines up to within one hundred yards of the Turks. They are indeed so close to each other that scarcely a night passes without heavy firing. Fire is opened all along the line upon the slightest alarm. At the same time that Skobelev advanced, the Guards pushed forward to a position directly under the Krishine redoubt, where the outposts now are, and the line extends back over the hills to near the bridge over the Vid. The village of Krishine remains neutral ground. Two days later the Roumanians and Guards advanced to within rifle-shot of the bridge.

The circle of investment is now drawn as close as can be without actually besieging the Turkish positions. Nevertheless, in only two places, at the Grivica redoubt and on Skobelev's position, are they within speaking distance of each other. There has been very little artillery fire during the last two days, and Todleben seems to have abandoned his plan of concentrated volley firing upon specified points, and only puts it in practice once in forty-eight hours. Deserters coming in from the front of Plevna report that the soldiers receive three-quarters of a pound of bread daily, and a small piece of meat twice a week. They complain bitterly of the privations to which they are subjected.

At the same time that a million and a half of Turkish rations were captured at Vraca the families of several Bashi-Bazouks and seamen were taken. They passed through here yesterday, escorted by Lancers and Guards, on their way to Plevna, whither they are sent as a retaliatory measure for the Bulgarians who are driven from Plevna. They were looking very miserable, but were transported in ox-waggons filled with straw. They were treated here with the greatest kindness by the officers, who took them to their quarters, and gave them food and even money, in spite of the fact that one of the women shot a Russian sergeant in the streets of Vraca some time after the occupation. It seems like a severe measure as regards the women and children, but in all such cases the measure depends for its justification on its

success. The *lex talionis* is a hard law. Nevertheless, it may prevent more suffering than it causes if it stops the Turks from driving Bulgarian women and children from their homes.

The weather still continues fine. There has been no rain since the 1st of the month, and if we are to judge by appearances it may still hold fine another month. Nothing new has transpired relating to the amount of supplies Osman has. It is believed he will be able to hold out for another month. The Russian troops are in excellent health, and, indeed, the weather is so fine that the officers who have indoor quarters prefer dining in the open air. There has been no attack to relieve Osman by a force coming from Sofia. There has been no fighting since the fall of Teliche, and the Turks have not shown themselves on this side the Balkans. Bulgarian spies have latterly reported that forces are on the march from Sofia estimated variously from 15,000 to 40,000 men, but these reports have little credit here. As the Russian cavalry is considerably advanced, we should have timely warning of their approach should any attempt be made.

The army of the Czarewitch had little occupation, besides that of making reconnaissances in the latter part of October and the first half of November. In one of these Prince Sergius Leuchtenberg third son of the Grand Duchess Marie, sister of the Czar was killed. He was attached to the staff of the Czarewitch and had participated in several of the battles along the Lom, on every occasion showing himself courageous even to recklessness. He was out with his troops when a ball struck him in the forehead, death being instantaneous.

Before noting the rapid and critical development of the campaign in Asia, we may glance at the effect which the recent successes had produced in the Turkish capital —

CONSTANTINOPLE, November 9th — A movement has been going on in the capital during the last week about which I have found it difficult to get at the truth. Some of the mosques have been placarded with denunciations of Mirlimoud Damat the brother in law of the Sultan, attributing to him the misfortunes of the war, and charging him with having sold his country to Russia. All sorts of rumours have been current about him. Two days ago it was asserted that he had been poisoned.

Yesterday the Turkish newspapers stated that he had had a fit of apoplexy. I have reason to know, however, that he is well, and that if he has had any fit it must have been of a mild character. There is evidence, however, of dissension among the Pachas which may lead in a few days to important events. Hitherto Mahmoud Damat's influence at the palace has been sufficiently great to keep his enemies in check, but his deserved unpopularity is, I think, at last likely to bring about his downfall. He is unpopular alike with the Pachas and the people, and would no doubt have been got rid of long since but for the personal influence of the Sultan. The favour of the Sovereign, however, has, I believe, now been withdrawn, and Mahmoud may be considered in disgrace.

The outcry against Mahmoud is only one of the phases of the movement of which I have spoken. The party of Murad has been stirring, and on Friday and Saturday last the Government took the precaution of surrounding the Palace of Cheragan, where the late Sultan is confined, with soldiers. This movement is attributed to the Young Turkey party, though it is difficult to see what they would be at. There is no doubt a party, but I believe a very small one, in favour of Republicanism, of the meaning of which, except that it is government without a Sultan, they probably know nothing, and it may be well that some of the Pachas who are out may have been willing to use some of the hot-brained fanatics to get rid of the Sultan and the Pachas who are in, and take their places. It would be absurd to suppose that there was any patriotism in wishing to return to Murad. The present Sultan has done nothing which ought to make the Turks discontented with him, while Murad still continues in weak health. Another explanation attributes the movement in favour of Murad entirely to Mahmoud Damat, the theory being that it is of his creation, in order to gain the credit of himself bringing it to the notice of the Sovereign, and of showing him that he, Mahmoud, is still the only man who can render his seat on the throne secure.

It is fair to regard these signs of dissatisfaction and dissension as the result of the Turkish defeats in Asia Minor and about Plevna. The depression among the Turks of all classes is really very great, and is given expression to on every hand. Notwithstanding that telegrams have been issued by Government concealing the real facts, the truth has none the less become known. Perhaps even the constant repetition of warnings to the newspapers that they will be suspended, the last of which appeared only yesterday, if they publish "false news," that is, news unpleasant to the Turks, or, in the words

of the communication "of a nature to trouble men's minds," makes the public believe the news to be worse than it actually is. Twice a week we receive our English papers, and a larger section of the receive community the newspapers of Athens. It is unnecessary to say that the latter represent nothing in a favourable light for the Turks, and yet it is from them rather than from the Turkish papers under a strict censorship that the general impression of the progress of the war is derived. Not only is the war going against the Turks, not only do they see a large amount of destitution, misery, and poverty in the capital and in the provinces, but most of them have come to understand that in spite of the bravery of their soldiers Turkey can gain nothing by the war which she has undertaken. I have spoken in previous letters of the enormous drain upon the Turkish population which the war has made, and I mentioned a fortnight ago that the last reserves have been called out. These men have been arriving during the last week, and yesterday I saw some hundreds of the latest arrivals drawn up in line to be marched up to the Seraskierate or War Department to obtain their uniforms and to be drilled. It was a sad sight. There could hardly have been a man among them under forty years of age, probably hardly a man who was not the father of a family or the supporter of one. But while such a sight to a European was sad, the effect could not be otherwise than depressing to a Turk. He knows that the chances against his winning have always been great, and are perhaps now greater than ever. But the more thoughtful among them know a fact which makes them more despondent still, that every month of war, whether they win or lose, is weighting them the more heavily in their struggle with the Christian races of the empire. For Europe the Eastern Question may mean a struggle simply between Russia and Turkey. The Turks know well that when the present war is over the silent, inevitable struggle which has been going on during the last thirty years for wealth, education, and supremacy must be resumed, and resumed with largely diminished numbers on the side of the Turks. In short, in this war the Turks have everything to lose and nothing to win, the greatest success that they can hope for being to lessen the terms which Russia will exact. The result of this knowledge is to increase the party in favour of peace, at the head of which is the Sultan himself. In a country where one set of Pachas is perpetually intriguing against another, and where defeat by the opposing party usually means banishment there will always be a party which will encourage the outcry for prolonging the war, if the Pachas who are in

attempt to make peace. Still, in spite of them, the peace party is growing stronger, and is daily increased by the belief, which M. Thiers also entertained, that the longer the war lasts the more exacting will be the terms of peace.

It was announced yesterday that the Porte, in consequence of urgent requests, has consented to allow neutral vessels still remaining in the Sea of Azof to pass through the Black Sea, the Bosphorus, and the Dardanelles, to the Archipelago, on the sole condition of stopping to sell their cargoes in Constantinople, when such cargoes consist of grain. Whether there are any neutral vessels now in the Sea of Azof may, I believe, be reasonably doubted. This much, however, is certain—that several vessels have left Constantinople with the connivance of the Government, have run the blockade, if one may speak of running a blockade where the permission of the blockaders is given; have returned with Russian cargoes to the Bosphorus, and have, of course, not been molested by the authorities. This is in Constantinople a matter of notoriety; the names of the vessels are known to everybody who cares to make inquiries, and the motives of the special permission given to their charterers are freely spoken of. The fact possesses this importance—that permission being granted to vessels under the Greek flag, a similar permission ought to be granted to English and other foreign vessels. Indeed, if any English vessel should be caught in attempting to run the blockade, the fact of permission having been granted to certain vessels raises the entire question of the existence of the blockade.

The two Geshoffs have now been in prison at Philippopolis over seventy days. Up to the present hour they have neither been interrogated nor subjected to any form of trial. No charge whatever has been communicated to them or to anybody else, except, possibly, Mr. Layard. It seems now that their detention has been further increased by a difference between the civil and military governors. Ibrahim Pacha, the military governor, has, however, now been removed; and a telegram has, it is stated, been sent by the Grand Vizier to bring the prisoners to Constantinople. After this they are to be exiled; why or wherefore, except that they are wealthy and influential Bulgarians who have not bribed sufficiently high, nobody can tell.

After his rapid flight from the battle-field of Aladja Dag and from Kars, described by a correspondent in the preceding chapter, Mukhtar Pacha effected a junction with the forces of Kurd

Ismail Pacha, commanding the right wing of his army at Kuprikoi. Although this place had been fortified with a view to such danger as that which had now emerged, it was not deemed prudent to stay there, and the retreat of the united forces was continued through Hassan Kaleh to the Deve Boyun heights covering Erzeroum, at a distance of six miles east of the city. There, thanks to the foresight of Mukhtar Pacha's Chief of the Staff, Faiz Pacha (a Hungarian named Kohlman), a strong position had been prepared, and there the army rested until the 4th of November, when General Heimann, who had been joined by General Tergukhsoff, carried the position by assault after nine hours' fighting. The Turks lost forty two guns, including guns of position and the whole of their field artillery.

The following letter describes the storming of the formidable Deve Boyun position east of Erzeroum by the Russians under General Heimann —

- ERZEROU, *November 5th* — When I closed my last letter by saying that I thought the position of Deve Boyun impregnable when attacked in front, and that in all likelihood the enemy would in preference try a turning movement, I little calculated on Russian *élan* and the dogged obstinacy of their attack. Yesterday they attacked us frankly in front and took all our positions, after a hard day's fighting. The third and last barrier has been passed and at the moment I write the Russian siege guns are being pointed on the town. We have been summoned to surrender and Mukhtar Pacha's reply, as I telegraph to-night, is that he will defend the town while a single man remains.

The Russians following up the disastrous retreat from Kars, had camped in the plain of Hassan Kaleh, at the village of Khoredjuka, about an hour and a quarter from the Turkish positions at Deve Boyun. At this last mentioned point the mountains girding the Hassan Kaleh plain on the north and south close in, forming a narrow pass leading to id. From its peculiar form, and it has been named the "Camels e is guarded by three military positions, which on the occasion of the battle constituted our centre, right, and left. The centre is a long hill crowned by a narrow plateau strongly intrenched, and was defended by sixteen field guns. The right, at the other side of a shallow

ley, giving access to the pass, consisted of two conical hills, one dominating the other; behind them obliquely were two other mamelons occupied militarily. The right was commanded by Ismaïl Pacha, Vali of Erzeroum, and for some time past commanding the army corps of the right at Bayazid. The left of the position of Deve-Boyun consisted of a rounded hill, a spur thrown off by the higher mountains on that side. It was crowned by a redoubt, and lines of trenches stretched further west along the slopes of the adjoining hills. Thus the position, slightly concave towards the front, commanded all access to the pass. Its entire length was some three hours' march. To defend it we had an army of about 15,000 men. This consisted of 2,800 men, the remnant of the Army of Kars, which accompanied Mukhtar Pacha in his flight from that town; of 1,500 picked up at Kuprikoi; of 4,500 from Ismaïl Pacha's army, retiring from Bayazid; of stragglers who came up; of troops from the garrison, and of four battalions arrived from Trebizond. Faizi Pacha, an old Hungarian officer, chief of the staff, worked hard at the defences.

It was believed that the Russians would never dare attack in front the tremendous heights which fronted them. Our only care was the guarding of the valleys by which our flank could be turned. The Russians, with a rare ability, seem to have calculated on the general situation, the demoralized condition of the army, and the want of artillery which must necessarily have followed the capture of the forty-two guns at the battle of Aladjâ, took the bull by the horns, and stormed the position. The French courier coming from Persia had passed through the Russian lines on the previous evening, and had brought word that all the Russian generals were present, and with them the French military attaché, General de Courcey. This led us to imagine that something serious was pending, but all the same we never dreamt of the audacious *coup* in store for us. Bashi-Bazouks and Arabs from Orfa and Aleppo flaunted their tawdry rags in the muddy streets of Erzeroum, and universal confidence reigned throughout the town. At last the day of combat arrived. On Sunday, November 4th, the Russians launched their entire force against Deve-Boyun. This consisted of forty-eight battalions. (I give the statement of Mukhtar Pacha, commanding-in-chief the Turkish army.) Between eight and nine in the morning the long dark Russian lines were seen opening out in the wide dim plain that stretches away to Hassan Kaleh. The Russians are so given to an almost perpetual military movement that not much attention was attracted by the long lines

of infantry in the plain. I had seen the same thing so often from the heights of Aladja that I turned away my field-glass, convinced that it was only a Sunday parade. Later on I found out my mistake. Gradually the long black parallel lines crept closer, so quietly that if one were not observing attentively, the shortening of the distance might pass for an optical illusion. But the Turkish gunners had more accustomed eyes, and the long white curdled smoke-cloud that breaks from the central battery announces that the fight has begun. Gun after gun puffs out without any apparent impression on the menacing lines. In fact, they are at long range, and at best Turkish artillery fire is far from excellent. Not so the enemy's artillery fire. Shell after shell is planted in our midst with a precision which recalls the battle of Aladja. "I don't believe," said one old Moslem officer at my side, "that Russian officers direct those guns, they are English or they are Prussian." I had seen the changed character of the artillery fire when the Russians drove us from before Kars backwards on the Soghanlı Dag. The Marshal himself, Mukhtar Pacha, called my attention to this extreme accuracy of fire, as he had done on a former occasion when the Russians stormed Evliatepessi Hill. An attack on the centre seems evident, but yet the Turks make no movement. Every one is at his post, and an ominous silence broods along the line, save when from the right the heavy guns thunder out at intervals. Suddenly the Russians open right and left, directing their dividing forces outside our extreme flanks, on one side towards the glens leading to the valley of Olti, on the other to the flank of the mountains south of Erzeroum. A stubborn resistance follows, for the Turks have had time to march battalions to the threatened points. All day long the dull roar of musketry reached us from the lateral valleys. On the left, Mehemet Ali Pacha, the bravest soldier in the Army of Anatolia, holds his ground. At the centre, Moussa Pacha, a Circassian chief, commands, on the right, two Pachas have already fallen, Rufat Pacha and Hakif Pacha. Hussein Pacha, the old artillery commander, takes their place, and the fight goes on. It is evident the Russians are getting the worst of it, for their fire begins to recoil along the dun hill slopes on both right and left flank. I believed it was a Turkish victory, and that we were sure of at least a month's fighting before Erzeroum could be even menaced.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon when we saw the enemy on both flanks retiring, to rally out of cannon shot of our positions. During the side attacks the Russian artillery was

ard plied, and of eighteen guns at our centre fourteen were dismounted or useless. Then a sudden inspiration seemed to seize the Russian General. His rallied battalions were hurled against the long hill which formed our left centre. Arrived at its base, a steep slope screens the assaulting columns from the fire of the defenders. Russian reserves are pouring steadily forward. The artillery of the attack continues its deadly fire. The Turks on the long hill waver—they fly. The Russians are already on the plateau. Mukhtar Pacha, with several battalions, dashes at once to the critical point. Too late! The officers of the battalions fall dead, and flight ensues. The centre is carried. “I remained there,” said the Marshal to me afterwards; “I wished to die.” But people came round him, and he was carried away. Then came a hurried retreat on Erzeroum. The darkness only saved the army from annihilation or capture. We lost forty-two field-guns and pieces of position, and about 4,500 men killed, wounded, and prisoners. The Marshal himself admits 1,000 killed. We are for the moment blocked in Erzeroum. To the Russian summons to surrender, the Marshal, after demanding twenty-four hours’ grace, replied that while a stone of the fortress remained erect he would hold Erzeroum. We have 12,000 troops in garrison, much provisions, and plenty of ammunition. It is from the plain west of the town that we fear assault. I write these lines hurriedly, just before the departure of an unexpected Consular courier, as welcome as unforeseen. The Cossacks already rove over the Erzeroum plain, and it may be this will be my last letter from the Turkish lines. Whether the Russians will let me write remains to be seen.

November 10th.—Yesterday at three o’clock A.M., the Russians surprised Azizieh Fort, which was retaken by the Turks after severe fighting, continuing all day.

The Russians are advancing along the mountains south of the plain to interrupt our communications with Trebizond. Heavy cannonading from forts and rampart continues. Orders from Constantinople forbid newspaper telegrams. To-morrow the town will probably be completely invested. The losses on both sides are exceedingly heavy. The population undoubtedly wishes to surrender.

On the night of the 9th of November, two battalions of the Elizabethpol Regiment surprised Mount Azizieh, which overlooks Erzeroum on the east, and which was defended by three great redans. They took 500 men and 20 officers prisoners, spiked

20 guns, and then retired, as Fort Medjidieh, commanding Aziziéh, rendered the position untenable. The Russian loss was about 400. The attack was intended to have a far more important character, but according to General Heilmann's official report several columns of the attacking force lost their way in the darkness, and thus the principal operation fell through.

On the night of the 12th of November another attack was made, but without success, and the Russian commander then determined to wait for reinforcements, in the meantime sending his cavalry out to cut off the communications of the city.

General Melikoff, who had convinced himself that the fortress of Kars might be captured by a skilful use of the means at his disposal, had remained before that city, removing his headquarters to Veran Kaleh and kept up a lively cannonade against that place. On the 28th of October the correspondent with the Russians there wrote—

△ CAMP BOYUK TÈKME, BEFORE KARS *October 28th*—Since the headquarters were removed from the Karajal Hills subsequently to the battle on the 15th, fifty miles off and nine miles to the south west of Kars, I have not had the opportunity of telegraphing or writing. We have no telegraph office yet at our disposal, and several days may still elapse before one is likely to be established anywhere near. My own transfer to this place was connected with much trouble. As I was unable to load my big tent and sundry luggage on a single pack horse, I was obliged to apply for a bullock cart. It was not an easy thing to obtain one, though it was understood that I should pay for it as liberally as possible. Only after urgent entreaty the governor of the conquered country, a good natured old general, condescended to allow me the accommodation. Before obtaining it we lived at the Karajal camp as though we were out of the world. Officers passing occasionally knew either nothing about what was going on at the front, or narrated impossible events the coinage of their own fancy.

The removal of the Turkish prisoners was the last act performed in the great drama of the 15th instant. Now the curtain is lowered, but on the stage a new play is prepared—the siege of Kars and the attack on Erzeroum. Meanwhile, let me relate an episode of the victory of the 15th. General Gubski, the able and scientific head of the artillery before the Awh Yeh,

on advancing after the storming of the hill towards Vezinkoi, was stunned by a rifle bullet, which grazed the top of his forehead, without wounding him. He fell senseless from his horse, but recovered half an hour afterwards, and then continued his duties incommoded only by a slight headache. A few minutes later, while in conversation with General Heimann and the young Prince Mirsky, a Turkish shell burst right between the party, covering them all over with earth, which filled their overcoat pockets; but not one of the three was even scratched by the fragments of the projectile.

On the 22nd I was gratified at last by obtaining the much-desired bullock-cart, on which the bulk of my household goods were placed. This two-wheeled vehicle has a close resemblance to those used by the Aryans in their migrations towards the West thousands of years ago. The axle-tree, turning round with the block-wheels, supports two long beams, joining at the fore part at a sharp angle with the thole for the bullocks by means of a wooden bolt. The bottom of this triangular construction is formed by three cross-beams and some hurdle-work. This primitive machine ploughs through the muddy country at the rate of two miles an hour. For all that I was as glad to hire it as though I had obtained a Pullman saloon. The journey was far from being a pleasant one. We reached at first Subatan, still distinguished by its solitary poplar tree, the branches of which have been badly dealt with by the bullets. At nightfall we reached Hadji Veli Koi. Both villages have witnessed a series of sanguinary engagements, and their lanes have been reddened with human blood. Now they lay in ruins deserted by the inhabitants. Only three or four of the larger semi-subterranean houses have been spared for the benefit of the military authorities, who make use of them as post stations, hospitals, or depôts. All the remaining huts have been destroyed by pulling down the timber supporting their flat roofs, which is indiscriminately used as fuel by the soldiers encamped here. The Turkish peasants have thus literally lost everything which they could not manage to take away in their carts. Only the rough cyclopean black walls and the excavations give evidence that people lived here a fortnight ago in comparative security, under the protection of their own soldiery. We found piteous accommodation there for the night in one of their hospital tents which had just been pitched, and underneath which the cold wind blew in. On the following day we passed slowly over the late battle-field, having on our right the Awli-Yer Hill, and on our left the hill from the summit of which Mukhtar Pacha had witnessed the discomfiture of his

army Here and there we met with the carcasses of dead horses, or a still unburied corpse All these places, which some days ago re echoed with the roar of battle, were calm enough now Only endless strings of bullock carts and horse waggons, conveying the Russian camp implements, moved towards Vezinkoi Three heavy 24 pounders were equally on their way to Kars, each of them was dragged along over the steep track by a team of twenty two buffaloes, while numerous vehicles conveyed their ammunition and paraphernalia These formidable engines of war throw their projectiles a distance of six miles They will be brought to bear against Kars in the hope that the inhabitants will finally impress upon the military authorities the necessity of surrendering that fortress I don't suppose that the fanatics inside care much about their hovels being knocked over As I have heard since, they have not the slightest doubt of Ismail Pacha joining Mukhtar with 30,000 men somewhere, and of their coming quickly to the rescue of the beleaguered city They may be grossly mistaken in their calculations Independently of the fact that Mukhtar's troops are demoralized and very weak in numbers, Ismail too is not in a position to make a bold resistance When he heard the news of the battle on the 15th he took, on the 20th inst, to flight, pursued by sixteen battalions under General Tergukasoff's command In his disorderly haste he has in the first place left about 4,500 of his sick and wounded behind, entrusting them to the generosity of his adversary, perhaps with the cunning view of hampering him In the second place hundreds of his soldiers desert daily, and others throw away their arms, ammunition, and knapsacks, with which the road to Erzeroum is strewn These facts do not speak much for the efficiency of his forces, should he even be lucky enough to reach Mukhtar or Erzeroum before the Russians In case, however the two Parties meet, the Russians will, with their hosts, be in a position to annihilate them, and will most probably

surprise, and then, as they have no heavy guns at their command, their situation may become awkward when the cold weather sets in, which we expect from day to day While writing, I am informed that Generals Heimann and Tergukasoff effected their junction yesterday at Kuprikoi, only about twenty five miles distant from Erzeroum, and are now pursuing Mukhtar and Ismail Pacha The Turkish generals are not now capable of resisting the Russians an instant in the open field, but the danger is that they may find shelter, food, provisions, arms, ammunition, and new courage

within the walls of Erzeroum, till Ali Pacha from Batoum and reinforcements from Constantinople, come up *via* Trebizond.

As to my further journey to headquarters, I have little of interest to narrate. The succession of dreary hills and table lands, all uniformly carpeted with withered grass, bore a repulsive aspect, and the carcasses of horses and bullock were far from giving the landscape a touch of the picturesque. Moreover the whole scenery was veiled in mist, and the temperature was not quite intertropical. We reached Vezinkoi, on the heights of which Generals Heimann and Lazareff had met on the day of the memorable battle with their victorious troops. Here a camp was established belonging to a brigade ordered to invest Kars on this side. The plateau behind, and the rocky conical hill close by, vomited no more iron and lead from their numerous intrenchments, which on the 15th inst. by one had been stormed with irresistible pluck on the 15th inst. On examining those formidable positions I could not help thinking that if the Turks had shown their ordinary stubbornness it would have been doubtful whether the Russians, with their comparatively small attacking forces, could have carried the day. As I am well acquainted with the environs of Plevna, I can say that here was a more difficult piece of work to be achieved than on those soft, sloping hills. Stupid pride had ruffled Ghazi Mukhtar, or he would have retired from his useless position on the Aladja, from which winter would have driven him anyhow, and would have kept the plateaux of Vezinkoi only, with a firm hold on Kars. He might still have been the Ghazi, whom he is no longer but in name. In fact, the Turks were demoralized by the belief current among them that they were surrounded by a force of 100,000 men. In magnifying thus their enemy's number they fought with a faint heart, and ran much quicker than they ought. Their wounded and dead cannot be therefore so very numerous as was at first supposed, and some of the gallant cavalry charges mentioned in the official report especially those on the troops retreating from the Little Yagni, did not at all bear the epic character attributed to them. As to the number of prisoners, either at first gross exaggeration was indulged in by the staff officers, or most of the captured Turks ran away again, hidden by the darkness. Now it is avowed that only seven thousand were taken alive. Vezinkoi had some thirty Greek families among its population. These descendants of Xenophon's deserted or captured soldiers perhaps, were driven away by their Turkish fellow-citizens some months ago, and their houses destroyed.

We rested here but a few hours, waiting for the carts, and then moved on again over the hills and table lands bordering the plains of Kars, some 1000 feet below. That fortress, looming at the foot of the opposite range of mountains, was rendered conspicuous by the sunlight which had managed to pierce the heavy clouds. The town has a semi amphitheatrical site between two spurs, on the slopes of which the cubiform black houses are clustered. The difficulty of attacking it in a regular way consists chiefly in the rocky ground before the forts, which does not permit sapping, unless with sandbags. About midnight we reached, three miles to the west of Vezirköy, the small Turkish village of Teknely, where we sought and found hospitality under the roof of the head man. The spacious dwelling room, vaulted with heavy timber, was separated from the stables by a railing only and its higher floor. A cheerful fire blazing in the chimney had an alluring aspect, and promised us a comfortable rest after our tiresome journey in the dull, drizzling atmosphere. We—that is to say, a consul, a volunteer captain, a rich proprietor and marshal of the nobility and ourselves on having met our fortune. I stretched my obliging Turkish landlord had spread over the floor. But lo! a frightful deception was in store for us. The fear of having one's throat cut in the deep well inside of vermin began crawling comfort disappeared as by enchantment and gave place to that of utter disappointment. Then a Turkish woman, decently veiled with an old towel rushed in bewildered crying for assistance. On inquiry it soon turned out that a stack of straw belonging to her absent husband had been partly pilfered by passing teamsters and Armenian irregulars, for the benefit of their hungry horses. We settled the dispute as well as we could, and it was agreed that the unwelcome customers should be liable to pay the price of the straw, in conformity with the regulations of the Grand Duke on that head. On the whole, the damage done before our interference was not so important as the excited lady endeavoured to make us believe. We returned to our hothead of parasitical insects, where Cossacks, Armenians, and Turks had already gone to rest, and slept the sleep of the just, despite the countless legions of vermin. With us sleep was out of the question. We were indeed glad to leave at dawn of day this intolerable cavern of torture. The people there had assured us that the headquarters were only six miles beyond Teknely. So we entrusted our luggage to the care of

an irregular Armenian rider, and adopted a quicker pace for our horses. We passed another Russian camp and depôt, and a little later the ruins of an Armenian village, which had been utterly destroyed by the Turks. Whether its population had been murdered or not we could not ascertain, as nobody living was visible on that dismal spot. We rode on, up and down, for miles. Ascending a slope in a straight line, in order to avoid the circuitous carriage road, my horse jumped suddenly over a muddy, suspicious-looking rivulet, instead of walking through it, as I expected him to do. Being thus taken by surprise, I was thrown off the saddle on my back. On recovering my senses I found my head comfortably lodged on the soft turf just between two fragments of rock, each of which was only a few inches from my temples. I was neither hurt, nor stunned, nor bruised, and therefore, knotting the broken bridle together, I followed my companions, who had believed me dead. The six miles were gradually lengthened to no less than twenty-five, and only late in the evening did we arrive at the headquarters, established on the Kars River around the village of Boyuk Tekme. The carts, of course, could not follow us up such a distance, and the consequence was that I was compelled to pass another luckless night on the floor of a suttler's tent, covered with my rough felt capot. On the following day the carts arrived, and I was thus enabled to set myself up again.

The camp here is now complete, with the exception of the most essential thing for a newspaper correspondent, the European telegraph. Every day they say that to-morrow the line is sure to be established, but when the to-morrow has become to-day no signs of activity in that direction can be made out. I believe that this untoward delay is caused by the want of the necessary poles, which must be fetched from the wooded mountains between Tiflis and Alexandropol. Time is of no value in Russia. The grand-ducal camp here stretches on both sides of the Kars Tchai, a river which is on the average thirty yards wide and one in depth. Here the watering of the animals and the supply for the men is easy enough, but the drawback is likely to be fever and diarrhoea on account of the pools of stagnant water which here and there are spread over the valley, and have all the appearance of breeding foul and unhealthy miasma. It is true that the heat is over now, and the pestilential exhalations are less to be feared; nevertheless, the sun has a good deal of power occasionally. Despite of all that has been said about the rigour of an Armenian winter, I find the climate here much milder and

more genial than that of Bulgaria notwithstanding our 5500 feet of altitude

The commander of Kars has as usual been summoned to surrender. The Council of War which was thereupon held returned a negative answer. Before the garrison rejected the Russian proposal a Turkish colonel of artillery a certain Hussein Bey who had been trained for eight years at Woolwich visited with his aide de camp our headquarters and was politely received. His object however was not to sign a capitulation but only to obtain as much information as possible about our strength and doings. The blockade of Kars is a very effective one. Some Turks tried to get through our lines but the endeavour was frustrated by vigilant Cossacks. The day before yesterday two English doctors too one of whom had just recovered from typhoid fever were escorted to our camp. On the eve of being shut up for perhaps many months in Kars they thought it practicable to proceed under a flag of truce to Erzeroum where they had left their depot baggage and two of their colleagues. The Russian outposts of course stopped them and conducted them to our headquarters. Here they presented their passports and expressed the desire to return home. In compliance with this reasonable request they were guarded and then conveyed to Tiflis at the expense of the Russian Government. They were very civilly treated here by the officers. Some however gave vent to a certain bitterness of feeling complaining of the English public having sent scores of Red Cross expeditions to the murderous Turks but none to Russia. I explained that the barbarous and miserably provided Turks were more in need of medical attendance than the well organized and civilized Russians. The fact is that every Cossack here is better clad fed paid and attended to than any Turkish captain.

Our three long rifled 24 pounders bombard slowly the city of Kars at a very respectable distance which renders an answer impossible.

Very bad weather has set in just now. The cold rain is furiously beating against my tent but notwithstanding I hear the heavy boom of our guns cannonading Kars.

On the 4th of November the same correspondent wrote —

△ CAMP BOYUK TEKME November 4th — The iron band around Kars is so tightly drawn that no living being can go out or in without being challenged and stopped. I very dry Turks and Armenians trying to break the blockade, are arrested and

escorted to headquarters, in order to undergo a close examination as to their identity and their movements. On questioning them, their invariable answer is that they know nothing whatever about anything; but gradually, either frightened by threats of being shot as spies, or inveigled by offers of money and sundry presents, they begin to talk. At first they are timid and incoherent, but soon, giving course to their fancy, they state things beyond the limits of all probability. We made thus, shortly after the battle, a doubtful acquisition. A young man, calling himself Osman Bey, has deserted the Prophet's colours, and has declared his readiness to become again a Christian. The Russians are enchanted at having made so distinguished a convert. The young man, however, is simply the son of an English doctor in Pera. An artillery fire is kept up night and day by a battery of long-range 24-pounders established near the village of Matzera, in the neighbourhood of the Little Yagni. Hitherto nothing is known with regard to the effects of this bombardment, which, however, will assume more formidable proportions after the arrival of the siege train from Alexandropol. We only know that the inhabitants, as well as the garrison of Kars, are disposed to capitulate, if things should go adverse for the Turkish arms at Erzeroum.

One of the most important consequences of the victory of Aladja Dagh will certainly be the reaction which it is sure to produce in the eastern parts of the Caucasian mountains, where about two months ago a fraction of the population took to arms, and rose against the Russian Government, allured by childish promises which the Stamboul rulers held out to them through the instrumentality of the son of the famous Sheikh Schamyl. Emissaries and letters had been sent to the Kabardians, Lesghians, and Daghestanians, stating, with a power of imagination worthy of the Thousand and One Nights, that in the first place half a million of victorious Ottoman soldiers were on the eve of invading Russia, and of marching to their assistance, and in the second that some fifty camels, loaded with gold, were ready to cross the frontier with the view of enriching every one of the valiant mountaineers. This appeal to the greed of the people was indeed opportune, for without it we may fairly doubt whether their chivalrous propensities and religious zeal would have been raised to the boiling point. What had they to complain of? They pay no taxes, are permitted to bear arms, and nobody ever thought of interfering with their religion. They may erect mosques, study the Koran in their own schools, perform their religious duties, and marry as

many wives as they think fit for their domestic convenience. The only obligation imposed upon them in exchange for so many immunities and absolute personal freedom is to recruit among themselves in accordance with their warlike instincts a limited number of irregular horsemen as a contingent to the Russian army in case of a war. These volunteers are not called out at their own expense but receive abundant rations and a monthly pay of thirty roubles. Moreover, all legitimate booty which they chance to make—as cattle and stores belonging to the enemy—are either bought of them in hard cash by the Government or they are at liberty to sell them wherever they think best. In truth no people in the world are better off than these Mohammedan Caucasians. In addition to all this they are prevented from carrying on the sanguinary and ruinous feuds with neighbouring tribes which formerly not only led to the destruction of a vast amount of property but sometimes to the extirpation of whole tribes as a consequence of the terrible law of retaliation. They are intelligent and shrewd enough however to understand that after the battle on the 15th of October, the camel loads of gold may be considered to have vanished for ever. No gold no Circassians is a proverb the truth of which Ghazi Mukhtar Pacha was enabled to test when his Caucasian horsemen left him by wholesale desertion in spite of their boundless fanaticism. That the Turkish prisoners made on the 15th ult. were partly escorted by a Lesghian irregular regiment was a stroke of refined policy on the part of the Russian authorities which cannot fail to give ocular evidence of the discomfiture of the host which was so confidently expected to assist in the deliverance of the Caucasians from the yoke of the infidels. As after the failure of an insurrectionary movement discontented populations are disposed to keep the peace for a long time, the troops employed there will soon be available.

For Kars however a critical period was approaching. As soon as General Melikoff found that Hussein Hımmi Pacha would not surrender, he determined to commence artillery operations against the south east front of the fortress. On the 4th of November his long range guns opened fire from Magarlık. On the 5th, the Russian army marched from Karajal to Vezinkoi. On its way it was attacked by ten Turkish battalions issuing forth from Fort Hafiz Pacha. The Turks were repulsed, and the Russians, following up their advantage,

entered the fort after its defenders and effectually disabled its guns. When the Russian siege batteries were completed, they extended from the Kars Tchui, near Komadsöi, to the foot of the hills near Vezinkoi, and brought a concentrated force to bear upon the southern and eastern faces of Kars. The object of General Melikoff was so to harass and dispirit the men as to prepare the way for an assault, and we know now that in this he succeeded, for just before the catastrophe Hussein Hani Pacha telegraphed to Mukhtar Pacha at Erzeroum that his men were so cowed and dispirited that he feared the fortress would fall at the first assault. Orders were issued from the Russian headquarters for attacking Kars on November 13th, but the weather had made the ground slippery, and the operation was postponed, only however for four days, as the following telegram from the correspondent with General Melikoff shows:—

△ VERAN KALEH, *November 18th. 6 p.m.*—I have just returned from Kars with intelligence of one of the greatest and most difficult military feats ever accomplished—viz., the storming of a fortress, not only of very considerable natural strength, but also constructed by skillful European engineers, English and Prussian, after the best modern principles; a fortress armed with more than 300 Krupp and other heavy guns.

Kars is ours. In a single night it fell into the hands of about 15,000 Russians, who with irresistible courage climbed the steep rocks, the ramparts, and walls, and drove an equal number of desperately fighting Turks in a headlong flight over their ditches and parapets, compelling them to die or surrender.

All the nice inferences drawn as to the impossibility of storming even small intrenchments defended by breechloaders have proved to be incorrect. The nine forts of Kars, its citadel, and numerous batteries and redoubts, did not withstand a single night the onslaught of spirited young troops, for so at least were the Moscow Grenadiers and the 40th Division.

Such an important event cannot, of course, be described at once in all its particulars, and especially by a fatigued correspondent, with his fingers as cold and stiff as icicles. The escalade had been originally fixed for the 13th instant, but was postponed owing to the bad weather until last night. In deep secrecy the columns assumed their appointed positions. General Lazereff, with the 40th Division, commanded the

right wing, and attacked the Hafiz Pacha Fort crowning a steep rocky height. General Count Grabbe with a regiment of Moscow Grenadiers and a regiment of the 39th Division, assailed in the centre the Khanlı Tabia, Suwarri Tabia, the Towers, and the Citadel, while the Ardahan brigade and another regiment of Moscow Grenadiers, under Generals Roop and Komaroff, assailed positions further to the left at half past eight o'clock yesterday evening.

The engagement began in the centre. The chivalrous Count Grabbe led the foremost of his brigade in storming Khanlı Tabia, and fell dead pierced by a bullet. Captain Kwadnicki, of the 39th Regiment, jumped first on the rather too short ladder, and entered the terrible redoubt at 11. His sword was clean cut out of his hand, and his clothes pierced. Hoasene a large massive redoubt, surrendered early in the morning, then the three towers. The Citadel and Fort Suwarri were carried at the same time as Khanlı Fort. Hafiz Pacha Fort was taken, and in the morning Karadagh. The other forts especially Tekmash and Arab Tabia resisted till eight this morning then 40 battalions fled towards Erzeroum but were overtaken by dragoons and the Orenburg Cossacks and laid down their arms and were brought back as prisoners. The whole fortress and city, with 300 cannons stores, ammunition hard cash &c. fell almost intact into our hands. The Turks lost 5,000 killed and wounded and 10,000 prisoners, and many flags. The Russian loss was about 2,700. The soldiers made but a trifling booty, and spared peaceful citizens women, and children. This I state as an eye witness.

General Loris Melikoff directed the battle throughout. The Grand Duke was present also. The former entered the town at 11 o'clock A.M. to day.

△ *VFRAN KALPH, November 20th Evening*—Yesterday the Grand Duke Michael made his solemn entry into Kars, and received the homage of the inhabitants. He then proceeded to the citadel, where he entertained his officers at breakfast. Afterwards he visited Forts Hafiz and Kirihi. The Grand Duke thanked the troops in the name of the Emperor, passing in review several battalions, and the artillery paraded before the conquered fortifications.

It is ascertained now that the garrison was above 20,000 strong, Only 18,000 Russians were employed in the attack. The town is full of Turkish sick and wounded, in a filthy and neglected condition. Medical assistance is sadly wanted. Typhoid fever is spreading. The cold is intense.

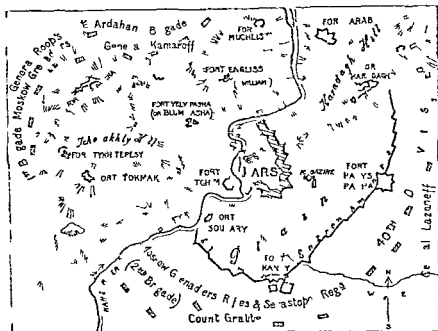
To-morrow the staff will go to Kars. Tartars and other mounted militiamen are still pillaging unchecked, but order will be restored to-day. Great difficulties are experienced with the numerous Turkish sick and the prisoners.

The following letter from the author of the two preceding telegrams, describes in detail the capture of the various works constituting the fortress of Kars:—

△ KARS, *November 24th*:—Changing headquarters is a disagreeable performance for any one not directly connected with the staff and its luxuries. The chief annoyance to a Correspondent, however, is when the telegraph and post offices are shifted, for a considerable time is almost sure to elapse before they are re-established in working order at their new places. The successful storming of Kars has given rise to a general migration, and hence the delay which has taken place in forwarding a full description of that remarkable feat of arms. I hope, however, that your readers were the first to receive from me by telegraph a brief account of the great event. Five days have I now been wandering through the narrow streets of this conquered stronghold, without being able to find a suitable resting-place, for the military authorities have laid hold of every empty habitable room for the use of the members of the staff, the commissariat, the ambulance, and other services. At length I am indebted to the kindness of one of the German doctors in the Turkish service for a corner in his primitive lodgings.

I telegraphed to you that an escalade was imminent, and indeed it had been fixed for the 13th inst., but as foul weather set in, the enterprise was postponed. In the hope of deceiving the numerous spies who had never ceased to sneak through our camps, and had always managed to inform the enemy of our movements, strict secrecy was kept with regard to the day and the military dispositions, and the rumour was intentionally spread that the scheme had been abandoned. The precaution was pushed so far that although enough had transpired to make me fully aware of impending contingencies, a formal denial was given by the staff officers to my questions to them on the subject. My censor, a baron of the realm, assured me upon his word that nothing whatever was likely to take place. Two hours later the staffs of the Grand Duke and General Loris Melikoff left the camp and rode to the front. The former observed the action as well as he might at the distance of about six miles, while the latter

commanded the operations at the limits of the enemy's fire. As soon as the moonlit darkness covered the scene the different bodies of troops marched to their appointed positions. Instead of giving here a minute description of the site of Kars and its fortifications I annex a plan of them —



A glance at the plan shows that the different works which encircle and protect the city are naturally divided into three distinct groups. One cluster of five forts crowns the heights to the westward which are called the Tchoraklon Hills and which are separated from the opposite hills on the east side called the Karadagh by the deep defile of the Kars River meandering through it with several sharp turns. It is difficult to understand why the water has broken in capricious bends through that massive accumulation of black lava crags, instead of following the plain around the foot of the mountains. In all probability an original rent or gap in that volcanic elevation has directed its flow which has produced in the course of time this stupendous chasm. The rocky Karadagh is defended by the fort of the same name and the Arab Lalın both to all appearance of impregnable strength. The third series of fortifications consists of the outworks erected on the rocky undulating plain stretching before the town to the south of it with the citadel in its

centre. The fort Hafys Pacha, Kanly, and Souvary defend there the entrance of the city. They are connected with each other by a system of lunettes and entrenched lines. Special protection is afforded to the town and to these works by the lofty Citadel of solid masonry piled on an almost perpendicular crag, frowning over the Kars River, which washes its base and encompasses it on three sides. Here the Turks had stored numerous new cannons and firearms, clothes, accoutrements, and an enormous quantity of provisions. This vast edifice, composed of bastions, walls, towers, and covered galleries, was constructed shortly after the Crimean War. From its threatening battlements some fifty luckless individuals, Christians and Mussulmans, were not long since hurled into the abyss below, for alleged high treason during the blockade. Others were hung summarily on mere suspicion.

With reference to the forts and redoubts I cannot forbear to add, in contradiction to the statements of some tourists and professional military men, that the works in general, and especially those designed to protect the city from the side of the plain, were by no means adequate to the requirements of modern warfare. They were, in the first place, situated far too near the outskirts, and were therefore unable to prevent the town from being bombarded. The shells flew right across it, and endangered even the powder magazine visible on the slopes behind. Moreover, the particular technical arrangement of each separate fort reveals anything but the genius of a Vauban. These works had on their most vital parts neither ditches nor mured escarps, and the ramparts were formed there of mere turf sods and nothing else. The main default was, however, the utter absence of any kind of flank defence, in the shape of caponnières, which would have rendered an escalade impossible. Once under the ramparts, the assailants were no longer exposed to the firing, and were enabled to reach the crown of the breastworks in comparative security. Arrived there they had to fight the defenders again, but, being covered themselves, they fought on equal terms. Enormous sums have been expended by the Porte on Kars, but in vain. Hafys Pacha Tabia possessed, it is true, some bomb-proof vaults and a central redoubt which served as barracks for the garrison, but not having been sunk deep enough it was, previously to the attack, utterly destroyed by the Russian shells, and afforded consequently neither shelter nor assistance at the critical moment. The Kanly Tabia, a large redan, was shut up at its gorge by a solid edifice, which, in the course of the attack, proved to be so serious an obstacle

that the Russians, held in check by the continuous deadly fire poured from its embrasures, loopholes, and windows, thought for a moment of abandoning the fort. Thus partial, or rather momentary, discomfiture was due to their want of experience. In such an event the best plan is evidently to break through the covering on the top, and throw into the opening as many bombs as may be necessary for insuring the surrender of an obstinate garrison.

The decisive assault was fixed for the night of the 17th. I had no intimation except that which careful observation afforded, of the fact that an attack was on the point of being attempted, but an unusual moving of army vehicles attracted my attention. I accosted my imperturbable censor who sat musing on a rock above my tent. His thoughts were, perhaps, now wandering to his beloved wife and children, and then fixed in fascinated immobility on the white enamel of the Cross of St. George with its black and yellow ribbon, the dream and glory of every Russian officer. "Baron," I said, "I have grounds for supposing that we are going to storm Kars to night. Many tokens point to that probability." "Oh," he replied, "you always have such queer ideas, we don't think of knocking our heads against those impregnable rocks." "But," I ventured to object, "I know that a Council of War was held yesterday, which in principle pronounced for the assault. I observed, moreover, this morning, a movement of troops and army carriages which speaks in favour of my opinion." "Don't you believe it," he retorted, yawning, "our councils are in the habit of doing the contrary of that which they resolve, lest they might be betrayed before the time for action. To my knowledge nothing will occur. At all events you may depend on my giving you full information as soon as anything is likely to be carried out." An hour afterwards the truthful censor left with the staff and General Boris Melnikoff, who took a position somewhere in the centre, with the view of directing the operations, so far as this was practicable during that night, though beyond a distance of 500 yards little more could be made out by the eye than the sparkling of the rifle firing and the bright broad flash of the cannons and their bursting projectiles.

The battle was necessarily much more the work of the subaltern officers and privates than of the generals—a fact which was the best pledge for a prompt victory, if victory were possible at all. Of course, the enemy was likely to be driven over his own parapets without my knowing anything about it, nevertheless, it would have been interesting to ascertain whether the project of a nocturnal attack, which was so much in

accordance with the opinion I had formed for myself, had a successful issue or the contrary. I walked about an hour in the direction of Kars, and at eight o'clock reached the summit of the foremost peak belonging to the group of isolated porphyry hills which enclosed our now deserted headquarters near Verankoi. The cold was intense and penetrating. A light breeze blowing from the east chilled my blood, but I did not heed it in my eagerness to watch the great drama which was on the point of being performed. The full moon shone from the dark blue sky. The plain, the lower hills and valleys, seemed to slumber peacefully in the dark, but above them loomed the snow-wrapped mountain ridges glimmering in the beams of the moon. The deep boom of the heavy guns, which for some weeks had interrupted the general silence at night, had ceased for a while to remind the inhabitants of the presence of the enemy, who now crept stealthily up to them like a lion towards his prey. They were far from supposing that the ominous silence was the preamble of a sanguinary calamity which was destined to befall their city before the dawn of day. Although numerous spies had gone to and fro they could only give contradictory information, in accordance with the contradictory rumours spread deliberately by our crafty staff. It is astonishing how well the Russian strategists have learnt the arts of superior warfare within the last three months.

The Turkish authorities inside were in a high state of irritation, on account of the annoying uncertainty in which they were kept with regard to their adversaries' plans, and began to accuse their own officers of high treason. The very morning before the assault the commander ordered a lieutenant to be hanged summarily on that indictment because he had pronounced himself in favour of surrender in one of the coffee-houses. It is said, and is probable too, that a few hundred roubles had been found in his pockets. Might he not have stolen the money from some Russian officer or merchant? His death was soon to be avenged. I had hardly strained my eyesight for a few minutes, in order to distinguish the doomed city, hid in the dark bosom of the rocks, when the sudden flash of a cannon burst out as a signal in the centre of the Russian lines, and broke the lingering calm. Then more flashes followed in rapid succession before forts Hafys Pacha, Kanly, and Souvary, and some seconds later detonation after detonation were heard. Again a few minutes elapsed. Then a swift reply flashed and thundered from all the detached works and the citadel. The forts and field-guns in the trenches between them vomited fire and iron, and sent a profusion of loud bursting shells, shrapnels, and rockets into the dark

plain where invisible columns of Russian infantry steadily moved onward. Shortly afterwards the action was proceeding with relentless fury. In the meantime the commanding Pacha sat at his dinner table and enjoyed his meal with epicurean placidity. He received the report of an aide-de camp, who, as a perfect Turkish courtier, disliked to disturb his superior's good
 sant news, and
 to the cannonade.

significant demonstration, but they were by that time already baffled and in full retreat. Thereupon the Pacha continued to enjoy his dinner, and afterwards his pipe and coffee. Only when the roar of the battle was ever increasing, and rose finally to vehemence, did he shake off his optimism. The Russians, obedient to the instructions they had received not to betray their position by inopportune firing advanced in silence in nowise daunted by the shower of shells, shrapnels, and bullets which whirled through the air above them, but which could only be aimed at random, owing to the insufficient light of the hazy moon.

On the Russian right wing operated the 40th Division, sixteen battalions strong, directing their columns against the Hafys Pacha the Karadagh, and the Arab Tabrias. In the center, designed to storm the Kanly and Souvary Tabrias, the city and its towering Citadel, were the 2nd Brigade of the Moscow Grenadiers, the Sebastopol Regiment of the 19th Division, two battalions of Caucasian riflemen, and two of sappers, together, if I am not mistaken, fourteen battalions. These combined forces were placed under the command of the energetic and intelligent Lieutenant-General Lazareff. They had to perform the most serious part of the attack, and were directed to carry the aforesaid works at any cost. Separated from them, beyond the left bank of the Kars river, to the north of the rocky steeps of the Tcholak Tepe, another division, under Lieutenant General Roop, was stationed. Its task consisted principally in making a resolute demonstration on the western and northern sides of that hill, defended by five strong forts which efficiently cover each other, but are, on the other hand, in the awkward position of being almost of no avail, in case the Karadagh forts and the city should be taken. There is no water at hand on those rocks, and the defenders are dependent on the depots and magazines in Kars and the Citadel for the necessary supply of provisions and ammunition. In the face of this fact it must be considered as a wise arrangement on the part of the Russians not to sacrifice, by a reckless assault, an unlimited number of gallant

men there. It is true that the eagerness of the soldiers to get at the enemy thwarted in some instances the original scheme; but on the whole the programme was faithfully and well carried out. The Turks were, curiously enough, of a widely different opinion. They seem to have held fast to the strange idea that the Tchhorak Tepe fortifications would become the principal object of the enemy's attack; whether because the valiant Kamaroff, the conqueror of Ardahan, stood in its vicinity with his old solid troops, or for some mysterious yet unrevealed grounds; in short, they had massed there the bulk of their forces, some thirty battalions. The impregnable Citadel, on the contrary, had no infantry garrison at all, and was merely defended by a company of artillerymen. The not less inaccessible Karadagh was likewise only manned by a few feeble battalions of demoralized and disaffected Shia-Arabs from Mesopotamia and Irak. These foolish arrangements are worth investigation in order to ascertain why the commanding Pacha and his councillors ordered so strange a disposition of their forces, which numbered well nigh 20,000 combatants, for such a garrison should be fully equal to the task of defending a fortress like Kars, even against twice that number of the best soldiers in the world. The Russian Division brought to bear on the five forts of the Tchhorak Tepe was composed of the 1st Brigade of Moscow Grenadiers and the Ardahan Brigade, constituting a force of fourteen battalions, commanded, as I have already stated, by General Roop. It must, however, be remembered that the above enumerated forty-two battalions were not all engaged in the escalade, but that about one-third of them formed the reserves. One hundred and forty-four field-pieces and fifty-two position guns seconded the movements, so far as this was possible. I am assured that their practice was excellent, notwithstanding the uncertain light of the moon. They were directed in their aim by the enemy's fire.

The first outwork scaled, by placing ladders against the steep parapets, was the Hafys Pacha Tabia, the massive redoubt of which had been previously destroyed during the bombardment. The Arab troops posted there left the ramparts, the turrets, and the intervening trenches in headlong flight, abandoning the field-pieces which were placed in them. At the same time the 2nd Brigade of Moscow Grenadiers assailed the Souvary and the Kanly Tabias. The former, an ordinary redoubt, was soon carried; but the latter, a very strong fort, was tenaciously defended, and occasioned the loss of many gallant officers and men. Major-General Count Grabbe, a zealous and distinguished soldier, the father of four children,

led his column on horseback on the Kanly Tabia. At about eleven o'clock, however, two bullets simultaneously pierced his breast and terminated his gallant career. He expired before reaching the ambulance. Only a few weeks ago he had been decorated with the cross of St. George for his valorous behaviour at the storming of Ardahan. I met him some days before the battle, and he showed me then two other such crosses which he had received by the same post from his wife and his sister as a congratulatory present. "You see," he said smiling in a melancholy way, "I am well provided should I perchance lose my cross." I observed him often kneeling before his field bed absorbed in prayer and meditation, with his head buried in the cushions. Colonel Blumering of the Sappers, then assumed the command of the brigade, and with iron grasp, seized the formidable redan. He and the pony he is accustomed to ride seem to be shot-proof, as on several occasions, especially at Ardahan, they remained for hours unscathed in a hailstorm of bullets. The earthworks of the Kanly Tabia were taken by escalade, and the garrison was driven out by the bayonet. Captain Kwidnitzky, of the Sebastopol Regiment, was the first on the ladder and on the crown of the rampart. The handle of his sword was shot away, and his clothes were torn to rags by bullets and bayonets. He showed me the ladder which he had climbed, still leaning against the wall. I found it to be about three yards too short, an awkward circumstance, which might have led to failure had it not been for the demoralized state of the defenders. Some of them, however, animated by an energetic Pacha, had shut themselves up in the long massive redoubt at the gorge, and thence kept up a murderous rifle firing till four o'clock in the morning. The young Russian troops already thought of abandoning their conquest, on account of the rapid volleys fired from the loop holes, which dealt very badly with them. They sent word to that effect to General Loris Melnikoff, asking for reinforcements, or for leave to retreat. The Commander in Chief, having no reserves at hand, ordered two sotnias of Cossacks to dismount, and to assist the wavering infantry. The riders followed the summons with loud cheers, and backed the Grenadiers so efficiently that they regained their exhausted courage, and braved anew the enemy's fire as steadily as the old Caucasian soldiers. General Gubsky, the gallant and able chief of the artillery, a man of modesty and spotless character, managed to finish the sanguinary struggle by the threat of blowing the whole redoubt up with dynamite. As in all probability this ingenious scheme would have been carried into execution, the Pacha inside reflected on the

matter, and thought it best to open negotiations, upon which he surrendered on the condition, which was readily granted that his and his soldiers' lives should be spared.

In the meantime, at half-past ten o'clock, the troops who had been victorious on that part of the line of battle entered the town, and drove the despairing Turks from street to street and shelter to shelter towards the Tchorak Tepe and the Citadel. The frightened inhabitants on their part had either hid themselves in their stone hovels and cellars, or taken refuge in the Armenian quarter, situated at the back part of the town and up hill. A German doctor had the pleasure of sheltering and protecting some fifty Turkish women and children in his small lodgings. Deadly fear prevailed among all the worshippers of the Arabian Prophet, for they knew they had insulted and murdered nearly all the Russian wounded and such prisoners as had the misfortune to fall into their barbarous hands. They expected nothing less than death. Even Russian officers expressed the fear that their excited soldiers might, in the case of complete success, put aside all feelings of humanity and spare no living soul. But contrary to expectation, the jovial, good-natured fellows with genuine religious feeling, refrained from taking revenge on their fanatical foes, and behaved as Christian men. Not a single civilian was slain, or even insulted, and not a woman had to complain of insult. I wonder how many other soldiers of Europe would have so leniently dealt with the inhabitants of a stormed fortress, stained with the blood of hundreds of defencelessly slaughtered comrades? Many windows were, it is true, pierced by bullets: but behind them no one was killed, save such Turkish soldiers as were obstinate enough to withstand to the last. I saw a loophole of a minaret riddled with shots all around like a target, where some fanatical imaum, perhaps, had insidiously fired his rifle on the passing Russians, and had thus finally attracted their attention.

Slowly the columns advanced on the Citadel, and arrived at the foot of the zigzag road which runs to its summit. The narrow causeway was thickly crowded with fugitive Mohammedans, men, women and children, who all strove to enter the precincts of the stronghold, when the gleam of Russian bayonets appeared in their rear. Thus the gunners on the ramparts had only the option of massacring their own kinsmen or of giving up. They adopted the second alternative and surrendered. Thus this strong pile of masonry, containing the arsenal and depots of costly Peabody-Martini and Winchester breechloaders, many Krupp cannon, together

with an enormous amount of ammunition provisions and other military stores fell without a serious blow, into the hands of the victorious Russians. In looking from my window at that almost perpendicular crag frowning some 150 yards high over the Kars River crowned with a series of solid fortifications I am astomshed, and I am at a loss to understand, how it could have been so easily conquered and why it was not more valiantly defended. I am sure that a single battalion of first class soldiers might have kept it for months in the teeth of the most powerful army. At the time of its inglorious fall some battalions of the 40th Division had climbed the not less rocky sides of the Karadağ Hill and took after a short but sharp struggle at the point of the bayonet the massive castle like fort on its top. Its partner the Arab Tabia of almost without who the garrisons the accustomed food and by disease, unlike their Syrian brethren in Bulgaria withstood only for a few minutes the determined onslaught of the sturdy Russians and then either took to headlong flight or laid down their arms. One must have seen the Kara high position in order to form an exact idea of its very formidable natural and artificial strength. Like the Citadel it is surrounded on two sides by the abyss of the Kars river and falls off towards the southern plain in superbly high blocks presenting the aspect of a Cyclopean wall. With the conquest of these essential points which beyond doubt are not only the strongest around Kars but are perhaps not surpassed in defensive power by any fortifications in the world the remainder of the forts had become virtually untenable and the partly successful resistance of four of the five outworks situated on the Tcholak Tepe was of no practical avail. There the Ardahan brigade and the 1st Moscow Grenadiers had to meet and keep at bay the Turkish main force. The Russians were received there by a tremendous fire of cannon and musketry which it was difficult to meet. Their instructions however, did not permit them to storm these works but only to content themselves with an energetic bombardment. The city and the to an extent even beyond the original expectation though it was accompanied by severe losses to the aggressors. The Russian soldiers finding themselves out of control in the darkness advanced audaciously to the very margin of the ditches and kept up a sharp skirmishing engagement with the Turks.

sheltered behind their ramparts. From my porphyry peak I could only make out there, during the whole night, the incessant flash of the cannon, and the undiminished sparkling fire of the breechloaders. At midnight, however, the firing ceased suddenly on the Tchakmak (Tokmak) Tabia, and a few minutes later three rockets rose into the air and burst with a red light, as a signal announcing the capture of that large and well-constructed fort. The remaining four, however, successfully repelled the repeated attempts to storm them, which were made in spite of instructions. There blood was unnecessarily spilt. When the Commander of the whole fortress, who was present on those hills, became at daybreak aware that the forts in the plain, the town, the Citadel, and the Karadagh were silenced, and saw the victorious Russian colours flying from their battlements, his heart sank and he lost his head. It was impossible to procure water and provisions for his remaining troops, and his ammunition had run short. It was then he came to the decision to avail himself of a gap which the Russians had left open expressly for that purpose, in their investing lines, and evacuating the forts and other positions, he tried to make good his escape towards Batoum, with the remnants of his forty battalions and his cavalry. Instead of remaining with the rear, as was his duty, he consulted only the interest of his personal safety, and was among the foremost fugitives. Thanks to his fleet Arab steed, he succeeded in crossing the snow-covered mountains which border the Kars plain to the westward, with some 150 well-mounted followers, and escaped.

Thoroughly stiffened by the cold, which during the same night killed eleven prisoners, I returned to our camp at a quick pace, and ordered my servant to saddle the horses, after having indulged in a glass of brandy and some cakes, while the battle was still going on around the Tchoraklou Tepe fortifications. Then I rode at full speed towards Kars. I at once saw the Turkish columns fleeing towards the opposite snow-capped mountains. Their endeavour to escape in that direction proved vain. From all sides numerous Russian cavalry regiments, accompanied by horse-artillery, galloped onward, with the view of cutting off their retreat. The Nishninovgorod and the Sever Dragoons, with the Orenburg and other Cossacks, were quick on their heels, and, overtaking them, summoned them to surrender. The Turks, under the apprehension of being cut down, refused; but when the Horse Artillery began to play on them with shrapnel, they took a more reasonable view of the case, and laying down their arms, gave themselves up to General Prince Tcherbasoff,

the commander of that cavalry brigade. It was said in camp that this gallant trooper had been killed during the night, but this was happily untrue. I had the pleasure of meeting him in full health on the same day, and was glad to see him display his accustomed joyous humour. Another prince—heaven and the Emperor know there is no lack of princes in the Caucasian provinces—whose somewhat queer name I don't remember, a colonel of a Cossack regiment, pursued the Turkish cavalry sharply, and crossed swords with it. He was slightly wounded in his right hand, but the enemy was cut down to the last man. The Turkish pony cannot race with the Russian light cavalry horse, though the genuine Arab coursers have proved to be more than a match for him. I suppose that the reception which the Turkish commander of Kars is likely to meet with in Constantinople will hardly be a flattering one. At all events he deserves, partly for his cruelties, partly for the miserable defence of so strong, well provided, and well garrisoned a fortress, to be hanged on the highest gallows which Turkey can erect. That attempts to bribe somebody were made, and had a chance of being brought to the desired end, I positively know, but whether the goodwill of an important traitor was really secured, and if so, whether he was able to fulfil his promise, I cannot tell. Further, I am quite in the dark with regard to the individual who may have entered into the black bargain. The European doctors here account for the disaster which so suddenly befell the Turks, by stating that the troops, especially the Arabs and Kurds, were in a despondent state of mind, badly clad and fed, and never paid, and had moreover a dislike to fighting the battles of their Sunnite masters. Yet these very worthies whose disposition could be no secret for the commander and his council, had been appointed and left in insufficient numbers to defend the most important and the most vulnerable points of the fortress.

I arrived at Kars just when the occupation of all its outworks by the Russians had been effected. The Turkish dead lay by scores in and behind the trenches, wherever I looked, all frozen stiff in the attitude in which they had expired. Hundreds of large wild dogs gnawed the bones of the numerous dead horses, whose skins, however, had been previously flayed by some hardy speculator. I then entered a broad ravine, likewise strewn with corpses, and wheeled my horse towards a wooden bridge over the Kars River, together with some stray soldiers who went to visit the conquered city for the sake of plunder or curiosity. Suddenly a gendarme rode up in wild haste, shouting and gesticulating, "Take care!"

Don't you advance! The Turks will attack you." I did not understand at first what he meant, but felt uneasy on seeing the soldiers slide behind the rocks, preparing and levelling their rifles. This induced me to stand aside so far as the perpendicular borders of the ravine permitted. I could not but believe that a quarter of the town was still in possession of desperate fighting Turks, ready to make a sortie; but no report of fire-arms argued in favour of this supposition. At last the mystery was disclosed. Some fifty well-armed horsemen, recognizable as Turks by their pink fezzes, dashed with clanging hoofs over the bridge, fast pursued by a squad of Cossacks. The situation became rather critical for me, as I was crammed in between the barbarous riders and the Russian soldiers. It was evident that the Mussulmans, relying on the excellence of their horses, had the intention of breaking out on this side, and riding for life and liberty through the stragglers. Luckily for them and me, however, when they had crossed the bridge and found themselves engaged in the ravine through which the road runs with some twenty breech-loaders pointed at them, they halted and deliberated, obviously uncertain as to their further steps. Time pressing, they thought prudence the better part of valour, and surrendered to the Cossacks. As they had wounded and killed some Russians, shooting behind them after the Parthian fashion, in their precipitous flight, they were not too tenderly handled. The Cossacks pulled them off their horses, and stripped them in a twinkling of all they possessed, appropriating their animals. Had a broker been present he might have concluded excellent bargains. I refused an army revolver which a Cossack tendered to me as a token of his special esteem. This little adventure warned me not to enter the town on this side, and therefore I rode round to the principal entrance. Previously, however, I had the fancy to visit the Kanly Tabia which was not far out of my way. There Captain Kwidnitzki showed me obligingly the manner in which the escalade had been effected. I entered into the massive redoubt which had served as barracks and hospital for the garrison. Now its vast rooms were crowded with Turkish wounded, chiefly Arabs, who piteously called for medical assistance. This was unluckily out of the question by that time, because the Russian surgeons had enough to do with their own people, while the foreigners in the Turkish service did not dare to leave their houses for fear of being insulted, and stripped in the very streets. Besides, drugs, bandages, and other surgical appurtenances, had been wantonly wasted by plundering Russian soldiers, or had been put aside

by careful Turkish officials for their own benefit. So the doctors were unable to perform their duty, and the sick suffered for days without attendance.

Sick of the ghastly sight of hundreds of dead, expiring and helpless men, tortured by cruel wounds, and stunned by the cold, I left the Kanly Fort and returned to the town. Kars has no enceinte, evidently an incredible neglect on the part of the military engineers who have spent the Sultan's treasures or the European loans, on its rocky heights only. At the outskirts, before the entrance of their principal street—a narrow lane about five yards wide—a crowd of old and young Turks had assembled, waiting for the commanding general Louis Melikoff, who had not made his appearance yet. They seemed to be rather uneasy, as the plundering was fast going on. A drowning man grasps at a straw. Although I had no army or retinue behind me, they admired, perhaps, my badge as a Correspondent thought it perchance the grand cross of some order in honour of the most distinguished of the innumerable Russian saints, and insisted on my accepting their offer of bread and salt, imploring mercy for their persons and property. At that moment a gang of Armenian militiamen rode into the town. An insolent looking lad, their leader, addressed the bearded Turks with the air of Hannibal entering Saguntum, and said, "Now, you Turkish scoundrels, I have come to settle with you. Now you shall feel that we are your masters." My presence evidently kept him from striking the Mussulmans. Had I ever had an opportunity of seeing that hero and his like only within a cannon shot's range near the enemy, I would have pardoned him his arrogance, but considering that the petulant boy was, perhaps a few months ago, a noways honourable member of a Turkish bathing establishment, I could not but feel disgusted. Having been informed that General Louis Melikoff's arrival was imminent, I waited a little longer in the same place, and amused myself with observing the Russian soldiers, who came out of the city heavily larded with sundry booty. It is true that the goods which they had pilfered were not of a very valuable description, and had been evidently taken with the view of mitigating the hardships of camp life in their thin, cold, uncomfortable tents, but, on the other hand, they belonged to the necessities of the poorer class of the population. Blankets, rugs, old carpets, kettles, shoes, articles hardly worth one's while to carry away, had been abstracted by the soldiers. The Tartars, Armenians, and Circassians, reaped the fruits of the Russian victory with far more circumspection. Guided by some refugee well acquainted with

the situation, they broke only into houses where they had almost the certainty of extorting hard cash and jewellery. In their greed they showed a singular impartiality with regard to their victims, inasmuch as they robbed the Christians quite in the same style as the genuine Moslem. Whosoever had a full purse in his pocket passed as their natural enemy, and was violently deprived of its contents. During the first two days it was impossible to put a stop to depredations, but then order was vigorously restored. Many of these infamous marauders were arrested, and compelled to give up their plunder. Patrols of Cossacks paraded the streets day and night, and searched every suspicious-looking individual wearing the beehive fur cap. An old man decorated with two immense medals, one of gold and the other of silver, dedicated, perhaps, to Apollo, and Diana, or some other pagan saints, ran after a young Armenian militiaman, accusing him of having stolen his gold watch. Immediately the Cossacks seized the delinquent, and, searching him, extracted the missing precious object from his fur cap, and returned it to the excited owner, an antiquated Russian consular official.

As the Armenians, with few exceptions, are on the whole not an energetic race, the Russian Governor, General Papko, had no choice left but to enlist in the police force an adequate number of Turkish volunteers, former zaptiehs and others, who, being well and regularly paid—thirty roubles a month—exercise their accustomed sway over the overawed population with zeal and fidelity. Should the Christian races in Turkey, whether Sclavs, Greeks, or Armenians, not be allowed to take a prominent part in the administration of the country, the Turks themselves, if treated on equitable terms, and not marred by interference with their religious superstitions, will loyally submit to any European government. They are loth to obey their own sluggish Byzantine rulers, and are prepared to accept any other state of things that may prove to be better, and afford them a fairer chance of enjoying the fruits of their labours. Hitherto they have had no notion of a more orderly rule existing in the world. False statements spread by their cunning tyrants induced them to believe that Europeans in general, and Russians in particular, would persecute and ill-treat them because of their religious creed, and assign them a humiliating position, similar to that which they have inflicted upon their Christian subjects. The latter would no doubt have been entitled, with the Turks, to far more consideration, were it not for their cowardice and untrustworthy character, which could not but

excite the contempt of a warlike race. Now the Russia though far from being paragons of civilization, show by their equity and leniency how false have been the allegations published by the Stamboul officials and newspapers.

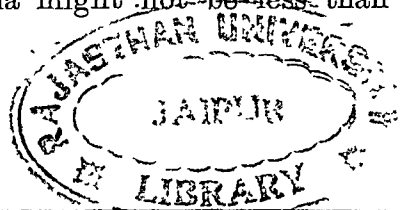
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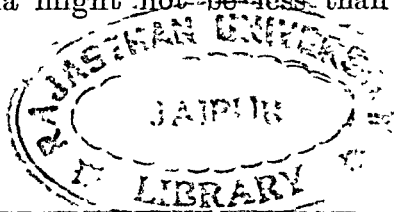
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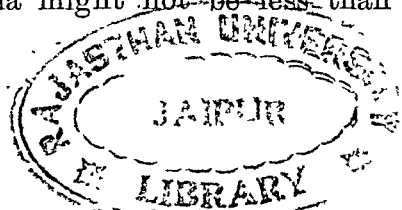
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CHAPTER XI

GENERAL GOURKO'S EXPEDITION

Passage of the Balkans—The Roads and Scenery—A Mountain Solitude—Capture of Kezanlık—Prince Mursky's Repulse in the Shipka Pass—General Gourko's Successful Attack—Turkish Treachery—Defeat of the Turks—Yeni Zagra—Decisive Defeat of the Bulgarian Column by the Turks—Eski Zagra—Retreat of General Gourko into the Shipka Pass—Suleiman Pacha the new Turkish Commander in the Balkans

We have seen in what relation the advance upon Tirnov and the passage of the Balkans stood to the attitude of the Army of Rustchuk and the Western Corps, under General Klenner. We now turn to the letters describing General Gourko's advance. The following is a summary view of that officer's operations, which are subsequently more fully described in the letters of the correspondent who accompanied him —

* * * * *

the narrative of subsequent events in the Balkans as communicated by the commanding officer to the Grand Duke Nicholas, and by him transmitted to the Imperial headquarters here. It was on the 14th that the Hankoi Pass was forced. The Turks retreated westward on Konaro, but next day, having received reinforcements, they attacked General Gourko's vanguard, a rifle battalion, as the column marched on Konaro. After some sharp fighting the Turks were repulsed, Konaro occupied, and two of their camps taken.

..

columns one consisting of infantry, close to the mountain. The middle column was cavalry and infantry, and the last column cavalry only, with orders to cover the flank, and, if possible, to turn that of the enemy. At Uslami he was stopped by a strong position, and had to cope with the Turkish artillery, cavalry, and infantry. When he was pushing them hard, five battalions of Anatolian Nizams came up as reinforcements, and behaved very well. Their fire, begun as

was at 2,000 paces, caused the Russians considerable loss. The Russian orders are not to open fire till within 600 paces of the enemy, and it was in the interval that the Russians suffered. But when their distance was reached they poured in a fire which soon compelled the Anatolians to give ground. The Russian direct attacking force was four battalions of rifles and two sotnias of infantry Cossacks, whom the Turks call "priests," because of the cross they wear to distinguish them from the Circassian Turks. While the direct attack was being delivered the Russian hussars and dragoons charged the Turkish flank. There was very hot fighting, sabre and bayonet both being used freely. The Turks were at length driven from their position with loss: 400 were left dead at one point. The Turks fought very hard here, but their defeat at Uflami seemed to destroy their morale, and subsequently they did not fight so stoutly.

On the 17th General Gourko approached Kezanlik. There was terrible heat, and it was fearfully severe marching. The infantry waded into little streams to become soaked and so gain coolness. There was fighting more or less all day. On the evening of the 17th General Gourko entered Kezanlik. The Turks had detailed from the force holding the Shipka Pass a column to occupy the heights flanking the entrance to Kezanlik and hinder General Gourko's advance; but his riflemen were beforehand in occupying these heights, and the Turks retired disappointed. It had been designed that Gourko should reach Kezanlik on the 16th, and on the 17th be free to assail in the rear the Turks holding the Shipka Pass, while Prince Mirsky with the 9th Division attacked them in front. But he was delayed by hard fighting, and the troops were too much fatigued to move further on the same day after the occupation of Kezanlik. So there was no co-operation between General Gourko and Prince Mirsky in attacking the Shipka Pass, but the latter nevertheless delivered an attack on that position marching southward from Gabrova. He sent against the Turks but one regiment, that of Orloff, which he divided into three columns. The pass was strongly fortified with six successive tiers of intrenchments and batteries, and defended by picked Turkish troops, Circassians and Egyptians. The latter fought very hard. Of Prince Mirsky's three columns, that on the right encountered little opposition and went on some distance, till it missed the support of the centre column, fought five or six hours, and then made good its lodgment in the hostile lines. The left column, consisting of two companies, missed its way, and was beset by twelve companies of Turkish soldiers.

It fought a retreating combat for four hours against terrible odds, losing eight officers killed and wounded and about 150 men. It was brought out of action by the only officer left standing, and he was wounded.

On the 18th General Gourko, his men refreshed, advanced to the attack of the Shipka position from the rear. Two battalions of rifles formed his advance. As they neared the rear of the position a flag of truce came out with a *parlementaire*. The rifles at once halted, and an officer acting as escort went forward to meet the *parlementaire*. While negotiations were going on, the Russian riflemen in their curiosity quitted their extended formation, and drew together into a mass behind where the officer was communing with the *parlementaire*. Suddenly volleys of rifle fire were poured in upon them from the Turkish position. The *parlementaire* took to his heels at a signal which the Russians heard but did not comprehend. So sudden and fierce was the fire that in their two battalions the Russians lost one hundred and forty-two men killed and wounded in a few minutes. The survivors in their fury waited for no order to attack, nor regarded any formation. With one common impulse and with yells of wrath they rushed on. It was a bad quarter of an hour for the Turks, but the riflemen finding no signs of co-operation in the attack from the north by Prince Mirsky, contented themselves with driving back the Turks some distance, and occupied the abandoned Turkish camp in the rear of the fortifications. On the same night, in reply to General Gourko's summons to the Turks to surrender and abandon the further unavailing defence of the pass, there came a letter from the Turkish commander, Mehemet Pacha, offering to surrender. Negotiations were entered into, and the hour for the surrender of the Turks was fixed for twelve o'clock the next day. An armistice was arranged and early on that morning the sanitary detachments went forward to bring in the wounded which the rifle battalions had been forced to leave behind. They sent back word that the Turks had fled and vacated the position. The offer of surrender was a ruse to gain time. Meanwhile, on the 18th, Prince Mirsky had remained quiet, waiting for further information about Gourko's movements. But on the 19th, young Skobeleff, taking some troops of Mirsky's, had pushed forward a reconnaissance into the pass from the north. To his surprise he met with no opposition as he passed line after line of fortifications, and the hastily abandoned Turkish camps, with fires yet burning, rations half cooked, and half-written telegrams. At length he reached the crest of the pass, and the view to the south opened before him. In

a hollow at his feet he saw troops in camp. Were they Turks or Russians? The tents seemed Turkish, but the soldiers looked like Russians. Skobelev tried the Russian hurrah as a test, but it was not replied to. At length he saw the red-cross flag of the ambulance staff, and he knew that the men in the valley were his own people. A junction was immediately effected. All the Turkish camps and baggage, twelve cannon, four of them guns of position, and four hundred Turkish prisoners were taken.

The Shipka position is chiefly in a forest, and very difficult. The fortifications are very skilfully designed, and are alleged to have been constructed by an English engineer officer. General Gourko reports that all his wounded had been killed on the field where they fell, and the dead and wounded were found headless, and otherwise fearfully mutilated. There had been apparent deliberation, for the fallen Russians had been gathered together into groups. Some Turkish wounded were found who, in expectation of a similar fate, drew their daggers when the Russians approached, and prepared to sell their lives dearly. Their lives were spared, and they were attended to. General Gourko remains in Kezanlik till the 8th Corps, now occupying the defiles of the Balkans, shall have passed through them and massed, with supplies, for further progress. The road at present is only practicable for vehicles drawn by bullocks; but large numbers of men are engaged in improving it. Several days will elapse before the onward move is made. Even the cavalry expeditions are suspended for the moment. The Turks sacrificed their chances of defence by continually dribbling forward reinforcements of two or three battalions at a time, instead of either attacking in force, or keeping the bulk of their troops in hand for a strongly sustained defensive effort. Their treachery respecting the flag of truce and their mutilation of the wounded are barbarities which place them beyond the pale of civilized warfare.

The following letters are from the correspondent who rode with General Gourko :—

† PAROVCI, *July 15th*.—Deep in a gorge of the Balkans, in a dark, narrow little dell, whose sides are so steep that the dozen houses which make up the village seem to be holding on with hooks and claws, to keep from slipping down into the deep ravine beneath them, lies Parovci, from which this letter is written. It is night, and a thick veil of darkness

covers mountains, trees, rocks, and forests. Almost perfect silence reigns, and the occasional cry of some bird, startled in its slumbers, echoes fearfully distinct and alarming. Other sounds may be heard if one listens closely, an occasional hum of voices, the impatient stamp of a horse's hoof, and the rattle of harness. The fact is, that just beneath the little house where I have found refuge, stands a battery of artillery, and that extending two miles further up, and three or four miles further down the dark, crooked, rocky little hollow, lies an army asleep on its arms, without fire or supper, waiting the first ray of daylight to resume its march. It would be madness to attempt taking the artillery along this road in the darkness, and there are artillery and cavalry here trying to make their way over this almost impassable road, as well as infantry. We are in one of the most difficult defiles of the Balkans, at the entrance to a pass which the Turks have left unguarded, a pass which we hope to get through early in the morning, and this is the reason of our secrecy and silence, the absence of camp fires and supper, and the usual sights and sounds of a bivouac. The glare of camp fires reflected on the sky, and seen from the other side of the mountains, might give the alarm to the Turks, and a very small force, a very little thing, would stop the way, and even result in the destruction of the column. We are less than ten thousand men, and we are extended along this narrow, crooked defile a distance of probably seven or eight miles. Should the Turks get wind of our advance they could concentrate on the other side and cut us off in detail as we came out, as easily as you can catch water coming out of a bung-hole. There are other dangers to be thought of too. One thunderstorm would render the road, already so difficult, quite impassable. Then should we succeed in getting out on the other side there is still the possibility, though a remote one, of the Turks rapidly concentrating twenty five or thirty thousand men, and crushing us before we can get reinforcements. It is a hazardous undertaking, but one which, if successful, will ensure the passage of the Balkans to the main army while if we are lost, the loss after all is not very great. It is the detachment of General Gourlo which left Tirmova yesterday for an unknown destination, and whose advance guard, after two days' march, has just reached and camped in the summit of the pass of Parovei. To-morrow the army will be over, and will pour out into the broad fertile valley of the Tundja like a torrent, to the great surprise of the Turks, who are watching for us in a very different place.

I left Tirnova the day after this detachment, and caught it up here in the night after a hard ride and search, during which I was astonished to find how completely so large a detachment could disappear in a single day, and leave no trace and no indication of the route it had taken. I knew, or thought I knew, it must have taken the direction of Elena or Gabrova, and it seemed at first a very easy matter to ascertain which it was. I first went out the road towards Elena, inquiring of the peasants coming from that direction whether they had seen the Russians, and where they were. I soon learned in this way, not only that the detachment of Gourko had not gone this road, but that the small Russian force in Eléna had left that place, and gone across country in the direction of Gabrova. Very good, I thought, the detachment has gone to Gabrova, and I have only to take that road in order soon to overtake it. My disappointment and astonishment were great, however, upon turning back and trying the Gabrova road, to find the detachment I was in search of had not been over this road either. It seemed to me at first as though the whole detachment must have vanished into thin air, for it did not appear possible it could have taken any other road. I knew it could not have gone further to the right than Gabrova, which leads to Kezanlik, nor further to the left than Elena, which leads to Slievno. And as it must have gone somewhere, it occurred to me it might have gone by some road between the two places. I determined to try, and striking across country through the fields, pulled up after an hour's ride at the village of Aplakova, between the Elena and Gabrova roads. Here I soon learned that there was another road, leading over the Balkans between those of Gabrova and Elena, and that a strong Russian detachment—a large army, the peasants said—had passed through the village yesterday, going by this road. This was evidently my detachment; and having found the trail, I knew I should have no difficulty in following it. The road, I learned, led through the villages of Voinis, Raikovci, and Parovci, and the pass began at near the latter place. None of these places are marked on the Russian staff map, and although they are on the Austrian map, there are no indications of any road, which shows how little, after all, is known of the passes of the Balkans. The fact is, the road is a carriage road—if the lumbering wooden vehicles of the peasants drawn by oxen can be called carriages—and not a mere donkey path, as might be supposed. Now it is well known that light field artillery can always be taken over such roads, not to speak of mountain guns carried on horses or mules; and that conse-

quently such a road is not called for an army although it may be difficult

a road, supposing

of their incapacity

Leaving Aplakova, I found the road led through a narrow, crooked little hollow, shut in on both sides by low, steep, rocky hills, that were covered with a thick growth of wood, and offering the most wonderful positions for defence that could be imagined, and I thought what a curious thing it was that I—to all intents and purposes one of the invaders—should thus be passing through the enemy's country alone, unattended, and unarmed by such a road without fear of molestation. This is in fact, one of the characteristics of this war. I knew that if there had been a single Bash Bazouk Circassian, or Turk in the vicinity, I should have immediate warning from the Bulgarian peasants whom I met every few minutes. The ordinary position of invaders and invaded in this war is reversed. The Russians are among friends who receive them everywhere with open arms, who bring them correct information who tell them exactly where the Turks are, their numbers where they go and whence they come, who do all the work of spies, as well as the service of outposts, while the Turks, who should be among friends, are among enemies, as much as the Prussians were in France, and thus while playing the part of the invaded have to fight at all the disadvantage of invaders.

Thus I pushed on without fear of meeting flying bands of the enemy, knowing well I should hear of them long before seeing them, and thus have time to avoid them. The road emerged from the crooked little hollow, led up over some hills that were covered with orchards and vineyards, then descended again into a wild narrow little hollow, down which poured a little stream over a rocky bed that just left room for the road beside it. A couple of miles of this, and I came to a very small house and a very small mill, where there was a single Cossack hobnobbing with the miller, his lance stuck in the ground and his horse wandering about at will, filling himself with grass. Here the road again left the hollow and climbed over some low hills, through a dense dark oak forest, through which I pursued my way, finding nothing more alarming to startle me than three or four great heavy black vultures that arose at my approach with a great flapping of wings and sailed off through the trees like a shadow. Then we emerged from the forest upon a high narrow ridge that seemed to be a watershed where we had the most splendid view of the Balkans I have ever seen. There was first a low uneven

hilly country, full of green little valleys and hollows, rich and luxuriant with orchards, trees, and growing grain, that almost hid the villages of fifteen or twenty houses which they surrounded. Then, beyond, the range of the great Balkans, their huge round forms rising up against the sky, in glorious robes of misty purple, and extending far away to the west until they mingled imperceptibly high up in the sky with the golden-edged, many-tinted clouds. Here and there they are still covered with snow, that gleams white in the sun, and brings out the purple with more beautiful effect, and seems to offer coolness, calm, and repose, high up there in the sky, far above the dust and heat and sweat of the earth. Now the road again descends into a delightful little valley, full of wheat-fields, and gardens, and fruit-trees, completely surrounded by high, steep mountains covered with forests, and we are in the village of Voinis, a cosy, isolated, primitive little place. Here we came upon the rear-guard of the detachment, and here we halted to bait our horses, and get something to eat. We went into the first house we came to, and had no difficulty in obtaining barley for our horses, milk, bread, and a roast chicken for ourselves. A tall, handsome peasant woman waited upon us, who wore a very curious headdress, such as I had never before seen in Bulgaria, and which I observed was worn by all the women in this village. A little round cylindrical cap set on top of the head, with a projecting brim on the top, to which was attached a long white veil that fell down over the shoulders and was wound about the neck and chin, and in the presence of Turks probably the lower part of the face. The cap itself is a thin brass shell set with some cheap kind of coloured stones.

From this village the road began to grow rough and wild, and we soon entered a deep narrow gorge, the sides of which were covered with short scraggy trees, and the bottom by a mass of stones and boulders, where no sign of a road was visible; a wild, desolate, forbidding-looking place, where there was no sign that the foot of man had ever trod. Here about sundown we came upon the rear of the column, a regiment of hussars under the Grand Duke Nicholas of Leuchtenberg, moving slowly forward. I determined to reach the head of the column if possible, and I pushed on past as rapidly as I could. This was not fast. It is no easy thing to pass an army on a narrow road, and at ten o'clock at night when I drew rein here, not yet having reached further than the middle of the column, which had finally halted, the advance guard had already reached and crossed the pass, and was lying like our-

selves without light and without fire, silently awaiting the first streak of day to pour out into the valley of the Tundja. This pass and this road I may say were discovered by Prince Tserteleff, to whom had been confided the whole business of obtaining information about the roads, the movements of the enemy, their numbers, dispositions, and so on. He soon ascertained that the Turks had fortified the Shevno and Gabrova Passes in such a way as to render the forcing of a passage at either of them a very difficult matter, and he determined to look for another. Count Moltke in his book refers to a pass between those of Gabrova and Shevno, but speaks of it as only a path not practicable for an army. Prince Tserteleff decided to investigate this pass, in the hope that it might lead to something. He soon ascertained that it had a very bad reputation—a place that was generally frequented by brigands and rarely used either by Bulgarians or Turks. Among the Turks he found it had even a worse reputation than among the Bulgarians. It was a kind of pass was in the clouds, that the
 ld, so savage and barren, as to
 l or beast—a kind of mountain
 desert where nothing could live. Pursuing his investigations, the Prince heard of a man who had been through this pass, and, finding him, he learned that he had been through in fact, but that was two years ago, and the road might have become impassable since then. But what made the information really important was that he had been through with one of the ox carts of the country. If an ox-cart could go through, very probably a cannon might be got through somehow, and it was determined to reconnoitre and explore. Three days before the arrival of the Grand Duke at Tirnova, General Rauch went forward with 200 Cossacks for this purpose taking with him Bulgarian guides. Without waiting to explore the road to the end, he immediately began preparing it for the passage of artillery, a task which, as far as the pass itself was concerned, turned out to be no very difficult matter, as the worst part of the road was on the south side. The most wonderful part of it though which forcibly illustrates what I

from Kezanlık to Shevno to strengthen the positions before the latter place, and these three battalions passed by Khaini

the day before the Russians issued out. These three battalions were just where they ought to have been had they known it, and they could have prevented the success of the movement. And yet, although the whole Bulgarian population of a dozen mountain villages knew the Russians were there, not one man was found among them to inform the Turks. Such is the advantage possessed by an army operating among a friendly population. The Turkish staff either did not know of this pass at all, or, knowing it, believed it to be so impracticable that they did not even think it worth while to place a corps of observation to watch it. The small body of troops mentioned in my telegram as being here turn out to have not been placed here, as I supposed, to watch the place. They were merely a small body whose retreat had been cut off by the Russians at Elena, and who had retreated by this road two or three days before the Russians came, without thinking it worth while to leave a single man to guard the pass.

The only danger, therefore, that the Russians had to fear was that some wandering party of Bashi-Bazouks or marauders should pass that way and discover what they were at, or that the noise made by the Cossacks in repairing the road should excite the curiosity of the small Turkish force which it was known was at Khaini, at the outlet of the defile. They did not dare to use powder for blasting the rocks, by which they might have made the road passable in several places where it could hardly be called so for artillery in the condition in which it was left by the Cossacks. Prince Tsertseff, who has greatly distinguished himself during the passage, and to whom must be given the honour not only of discovering the pass but of conducting and piloting the advance guard through it, went forward continually with one or two Bulgarians, reconnoitring the route far in advance of even the advance guard. He even disguised himself in a Bulgarian peasant's clothes, and went forward on foot, anxious to see if the road were really practicable, before the whole column should advance to what might, after all, be only a sheep-path over which it would be impossible to take artillery; and he was the first man of the Russian army and his the first horse to cross the summit, and the first to open out the defile at Khaini. For a diplomatist turned soldier, still a non-commissioned officer, the Prince is not doing badly.

† KEZANLIK, *July 19th*.—The road from Parovci to the top of the pass was not nearly so bad as I had supposed. Indeed, the road all the way up to this point has been much better than I could have imagined. It has been rough, to be sure,

full of holes and stones, in some places passing for a hundred yards at a time over mere heaps of stones that covered the whole bottom of the hollow, at other times through the fields by gates that we opened as we passed, but there have been but two or three places as far as Parovci where it has been at all steep. With help from the men in these two or three places the horses have been able to draw the artillery through with ease. At Parovci the road began to grow steep, and from here to the summit a distance of about two miles, the men had to help the horses nearly the whole way. But even here the great difficulty of mountain roads, their narrowness, does not seem to have been encountered at all. The road all the way to the summit was made wide enough for the wide-tracked artillery waggons without any difficulty. It leads up the side of the little hollow which is thickly wooded to the very top, and brings us out on a long narrow ridge, shaped like a saddle, and not more than fifty or sixty feet wide. This is the summit of the pass, and the descent on the south side is, we perceive, far more precipitous than the ascent has been. Here the men will have to help to hold the artillery back instead of pushing it forward.

We are 200 Cossacks drawn up on this ridge, with our horses' heads turned south, looking away over the interminable labyrinths, valleys, hollows, and gorges, so bore our way to the valley of peace can be assured. The first

streak of day is just growing visible in the east, and a long flash of rosy light is climbing slowly up the sky. Before and beneath us is a dark narrow gorge, still a pool of blackness, into which we slowly descend. We are soon down into the depths of the dark defile. The first three or four hundred yards are very steep, but at the end of that time we have come fairly into the little hollow, and the descent the rest of the way is gentle and easy, although the road is rough. The hollow is narrower even than the one on the other side, and the trees here are large, the branches completely uniting overhead, making it as dark as a cavern. We move on as silently as we can, for, to tell the truth it is, for aught we know, a most perilous venture. The Turks might choose to lay an ambush for us—to let us pass, and place a small force on the road behind us—and a hundred or even fifty infantry would quite suffice to bar the way, and render retreat impossible. So we push on cautiously, watching for any indication of the presence of the enemy. Daylight soon begins to spread everywhere, even down in the bottom of this narrow gorge, in spite of the thickly overhanging trees that do their best to

have required powder and blasting to repair the road in the places most needing it, and this would have given the Turks the alarm. We pushed cautiously forward, therefore, and about nine o'clock we turned sharp round a projecting bluff that a moment before seemed to completely bar the way, and found the defile suddenly open out to the width of half a mile and beheld beyond the valley of the Tundja, and here, not more than half a mile distant, we saw a Turkish camp. General Ruch had already learned from the Bulgarians that there were only a couple of companies here, and counting upon the effect of the surprise and the certainty that the Turks could not know that the whole Russian army was not at our heels, he determined to attack and clear the outlet at once. For two hundred Cossacks to attack two companies of infantry would be the height of absurdity in any other country in the world but Turkey. Here, however, it seems the most natural thing to do imaginable, and we accordingly began to advance, firing. We did not attempt to charge them, as our object was rather to drive them away than to come to close quarters, where we should certainly have got the worst of it. The Turks were, as usual, completely taken by surprise. It is not a little remarkable that outpost service should be often the very last thing learned, and that it should never be learned at all by some nations, as by the Spaniards and the Turks in spite of their having everything else—arms, equipments, organization—appertaining to modern warfare. I have seen a Spanish army march boldly within the enemy's lines, billet the troops in a village in a little hollow surrounded by hills half a mile distant, without putting out a single picquet with the usual result of surprise and defeat. The military history of Turkey is full of surprises and defeats caused by the neglect of the outpost service, and yet they have learned no more on this simple point during the last four hundred years than on any other. So the force here watching a most important point had put out no picquets, it was taken by surprise, thrown into consternation at the near approach of the Russians, and instantly began to retreat—two companies of infantry of the regular army before 200 Cossacks. I could hardly have believed it if I had not seen it. They fired upon us as they fled, and we pursued, firing upon them, but there was little harm done on either side, our loss being five or six wounded. We drove them out on the Shievro road beyond the village of Khaini and waited the approach of reinforcements. In the course of the day General Gourko arrived with six battalions of Russian sharpshooters numbering about 2,000 men, and towards evening the Bulgarian

egion, the dragoons, the hussars, the rest of the Cossacks, and the artillery arrived, making up the whole detachment, and the outlet of the defile was made safe. The force under General Gourko's command now consisted of seven battalions of Bulgarians, about 5,000 men; six battalions of sharpshooters, about 2,000 men, the battalion of sharpshooters being very small; a brigade of dragoons, 1,000 men; a regiment of hussars, 500; and three regiments of Cossacks, 2,500 men; three batteries of field pieces of six, and a battery of mountain guns light enough to be carried on horses—in all about 11,000 men. With this force, half of which were raw recruits not yet four months under arms, and one-fourth more (the Cossacks) irregulars, the Russians made and secured the passage of the Balkans, one of the most formidable bulwarks ever raised by nature for the defence of a country. And they did it with a loss of six men wounded. For the passage was secured from this moment. Even had the attempt to force the pass at Kezanlik proved unsuccessful, the whole army could have crossed this pass with ease.

The next day there was some appearance of the Turks concentrating to attack us. The three battalions that had passed on the way to Slievno two days before seemed to have returned, and made a show as if they would attack. General Gourko took the dragoons and started to meet them, giving orders for the Bulgarian troops to follow, as he wished to try them once under fire. But the three battalions of Turks retired so rapidly before the two regiments of dragoons that the Bulgarians could not get up to them. The dragoons drove them some ten miles in the direction of Slievno, and then returned to Khaini. This retreat of three battalions of infantry, 2,000 to 3,000 men, before 1,000 cavalry, was almost as bad as the flight of two companies before 200 Cossacks.

The next day after this affair, or the third after the arrival at Khaini, General Gourko, leaving the Bulgarians to guard the place, took the rest of the detachment, and started for Kezanlik. We met a small force a short distance from Khaini, which fled before us firing a few shots. This force retreating before us proved to be a most unfortunate circumstance for four or five Turkish villages on the way to Kezanlik. They took refuge in these villages, and either they or the inhabitants fired on us from the houses. The result was that we set fire to every house from which we had been fired at, and, the fire spreading, these villages were for the most part destroyed. The Turks seem to have the faculty of always doing the wrong thing and never the right one. Had they fired at us from behind the rocks and trees in the defiles of

the Balkans it would have annoyed us very considerably, delayed our progress, and have done the Turkish population no harm. Instead of that, they fire at us from villages in the plain in the most senseless and useless manner, where this kind of resistance could not delay our march an hour, with the natural result of getting these villages burned. They leave no mistake uncommitted that perversity, ignorance, and stupidity can commit.

In the meantime the news of our arrival had spread to Kezanlık, and the Turkish commander there detached three battalions from the force guarding the Shipka Pass, and sent them to meet us. We met this force near Maglis, when we had made about two thirds of the distance to Kezanlık, and the fight began at once. The Turks had taken position in the gorges, and opened fire upon us as soon as we came within

kept up all the way to Kezanlık, a distance of six or seven miles. That the resistance opposed by the Turks was not very stubborn may be judged by the fact that we made our usual march that day, and reached Kezanlık in the evening, having made the whole distance from Khani in two days. The Russian loss in this running fight was some sixty killed and wounded, nearly the whole of which took place near Maglis when the Turkish positions were first carried.

We got into Kezanlık in the evening, and were most enthusiastically greeted by the Bulgarian population. The Turkish inhabitants had withdrawn into their houses, frightened nearly to death. They had been kept in ignorance of the real progress of the Russians by the Turkish papers which had been announcing a continued succession of victories for the Turkish arms. Their relief upon finding that the Russians passed through the town without molesting them was very great. But they still had the lower classes of their Bulgarian neighbours to deal with, and this proved to be a far more difficult matter than appeasing the Russians. These Bulgarians had many an old score to settle up, and they proceeded to call the Turks to account with a promptitude and decision which showed how firmly they believed that Turkish rule and Turkish domination were things of the past. Getting a Cossack or two, of whom there are always a number everywhere without any very absorbing occupation, to go along with them they would go into a Turkish house and rifle it of as many valuables as they could conveniently carry off.

Money where it was to be obtained, jewellery, trinkets, ornaments, linen, clothing, carpets were the things that were seized. No house was, however, thoroughly pillaged and ruined, except a very few that had been abandoned by their owners, and those owners were men who, owing to their misdeeds of last year, did not dare to remain and allow themselves to fall into the hands of the Russians. One of these was a Sadoullah Bey, a namesake of the present Turkish Minister at Berlin, whose house was filled with plunder taken from the Bulgarians last year, and whose fields were likewise filled with cattle obtained from the same source. You may be very sure this man's house was thoroughly pillaged and wrecked, as were the houses of half a dozen others of the same class. The fault of it all must be fixed upon General Gourko, who for two days allowed the town to take care of itself, so intent was he upon carrying out the task which had been entrusted to him. Until the pass of Shipka was taken, his position was, of course, a most precarious and critical one. With a small force, completely cut off from the main army, and separated from it by the Balkans, against which the Turks might have rapidly concentrated their whole army south of the Balkans, he was, of course, justified in trying to get possession of the pass, and thus secure his own safety, before looking after the property of the Turks.

Nevertheless, I must say the Prussians managed things better. They did not appear in a village half an hour until there were proclamations on the walls, telling the inhabitants exactly what they were to do and not to do, with the penalty of disobedience printed in very large characters indeed. That penalty was usually Death. *Dera h.e., sed h.e.*, and a hard law is, after all, perhaps better than no law at all. But to those people who may wish to prove by what occurred here that the Bulgarians are just as bad as the Turks—as I have no doubt there are people who will—I should like to observe that there were no houses burnt here, that there were no Turks murdered, that no Turkish women were outraged, that no Turk was roasted alive, and that no Turkish children were spitted on bayonets and carried about the streets. Let it further be remembered that many of the Turks living here now were engaged in the massacres of last year, and we have the measure of difference between the Turk and the Bulgarian. I should have been glad if the Bulgarians had shown themselves free from stain in this business, but I fear that perfection is not to be found in human nature, and the Bulgarians must take their chance with the rest. The greater part of the Russian officers did all in their power to put a

stop to the looting, though the fact of there being no regular government organized, and that it was nobody's business, made it difficult. Among others I saw Prince Tseretleff laying about with his nagaika, or Cossack's whip, in the most unmerciful manner. Among others who had the misfortune to fall into his hands was the interpreter to one of the brigade commanders, a Greek or Italian, who had been received and treated as a gentleman. The Prince found him in a Turkish house dividing spoil with some Cossacks, and without any more ado, struck him a savage blow across the face with his riding whip, and ordered him under arrest, thus bringing his career as a gentleman interpreter to a close, an undiplomatic measure, but just for that reason effective and necessary.

To return to the military operations. General Gourko having reconnoitred the positions of the Turks in the Shipka Pass determined upon an immediate attack. The village of Shipka is some six or seven miles north from Kezanlik right at the foot of the mountains. A peculiarity of the Balkans is that, while on the north side there is a long series of hills, lesser mountains before you come to the main range, here on the south they stop off short, without any foothills at all, unless the other range south of the Tundja Valley may be considered such. As you ride along the valley of the Tundja you see those monster masses of earth and rock and forest rising abruptly out of the plain without any intermediate hills or irregularities like a row of sugar loaves placed along a floor and rounded off at the top. The pass is therefore only a couple of miles from the foot of the mountain on this side, and the road up to it is very steep and difficult. The Turks had fortified it in the most thorough and effective manner, and had the Russians been obliged to attack it from the other side it would have cost them a fearful loss of life. As it was, it has cost the Russians something like four hundred killed and wounded. But the Turks were discouraged when they found their positions were turned, and did not fight with any hope or chance of success. A Russian force had advanced on the Gabrova side, and it had been arranged that a combined attack was to be made on the pass from both sides at once, but owing to the difficulty of communication, the combination failed. The attack from the Gabrova side was made a day earlier than it ought to have been, or the one from this side a day later, I do not know which, and both were repulsed. The Turks might have held out a long time had they but had a supply of water, but although they had victualled the fortress they forgot what was more necessary than food and that was water. It soon became evident, therefore, that

they would have to fly or surrender. Nevertheless, in spite of this necessity, which was self-evident, and of the certainty that a great many of them must inevitably fall into the hands of the Russians, they committed first an act of treachery and then acts of brutal atrocity, that would justify the Russians in putting them without the pale of civilized warfare. During the attack made by General Gourko they raised the white flag, and when the Russians ceased firing, and sent forward a flag of truce, they seized the bearer of the flag, murdered him, and opened fire upon the Russians without warning. The whole business is so barbarous and so savage that the story would probably not be believed if it rested on Russian authority alone. Fortunately it does not. There was a Prussian officer present, Major Liegnitz, on whose authority, as well as on that of many Russian officers, the truth of the story rests. The Russian sharpshooters were pushing up the heights, gradually approaching the batteries, when suddenly a number of white flags were seen, and the Turkish trumpets were heard ordering the cessation of the firing. The Russians immediately ceased firing, and the whole line uncovered itself in what proved to be a very careless manner. A large white flag was then waved from the Turkish batteries, and a Russian went forward with a white flag to parley. During this time there seems to have been a general relaxation of vigilance, and Major Liegnitz went near enough the Turkish lines to open a conversation with a Turkish soldier. No sooner had the bearer of the flag of truce gone into the fort than fire was opened by the Turks without warning of any kind; and it was opened, Major Liegnitz assures, not accidentally by the soldiers, but by the sound of the trumpet, showing the order was given by the commander of the fort.

The next day, when the Russians entered the fort, they found the body of the bearer of the flag of truce decapitated and horribly mutilated, together with the bodies of a number of other Russian soldiers who had fallen in the affair either killed or wounded, and whom their comrades had not been able to carry off. Most of the Russian loss in this affair was caused by the treacherous fire of the Turks after raising the white flag. What could have been the object of the Turkish commander in thus deliberately decoying a flag of truce into his lines and then murdering the bearer? Evidently a pure outburst of savage ferocity; the rage of the savage who finds himself beaten on all hands by a civilized enemy, and flings a deliberate defiance at civilized modes of warfare and revenges himself in the only way his barbarous nature can find satisfaction, by violating the most sacred law of civilized

warfare—the inviolability of a flag of truce. It is even believed by those who have seen the body, from the marks of bleeding, that the bearer of the flag was first mutilated and afterwards killed.

* *SISTOVA, August 8th*—The following is a narrative of General Gourko's advance from Kezanlık on Jeni Zagra. His force consisted of three columns, with orders to converge on Jeni-Zagra as follows—The right column, consisting of the Bulgarian Legion, two batteries of artillery, and three regiments of cavalry, were to march from Eski Zagra, the central column, under Gourko himself consisting of the Rifle Brigade, a regiment of Cossacks and four batteries of artillery, marched from Kezanlık, the left column of five battalions of infantry, two batteries, and some Cossacks, marched from Hainkoi, the objective of all three columns being Jeni Zagra. Gourko marched from Kezanlık on the 29th July a terrible march of forty miles long. Nevertheless his troops came into action next morning on the left flank of the Turkish intrenchments in front of the railway station at Jeni-Zagra to support the attack of the left column on their right flank. The Turks fought desperately, and bayonet fighting was long and strenuous but after midday the Russians forced the position, drove out the Turks, took Jeni Zagra, captured three guns, blew up the railway station, and destroyed an immense mass of Turkish ammunition and stores. For want of cavalry, no pursuit was then possible, but next day the Cossacks fell on the retreating Turks. In the afternoon came tidings, by a circuitous route, that the right column was seriously compromised in an attempt to force its way from Eski Zagra and General Gourko determined to march westward to its succour. That night (the 30th) he reached Karabunar, where he arrived in darkness, but the whole valley was illuminated by blazing villages. Next morning he marched onward upon Dzuranlı, on the road to Eski Zagra, ignorant of the fact that some 30,000 Turks confronted him, and stopped the road into the latter place. The Turkish batteries swept the road with persistent fire, nevertheless General Gourko came into action, sending forward five battalions of infantry, covered by artillery. He had forty-eight horses killed in one battery, and eight in another. Later the Turkish masses strove to turn the Russian left. The operation was resisted by the Tirailleur Brigade, supported by two regiments of the 9th Division. The attack was repelled but with heavy fighting. Still later a column of Circassian

cavalry strove to turn the Russian right on the mountain slopes, and the attack was succeeding, when there appeared on the scene Leuchtenberg's cavalry, which had cut its way from Eski-Zagra, and which repelled the movement of the Circassians and saved the right wing. General Gourko then bore on forward, and reached a position which afforded him a distant view of Eski-Zagra. Here there came to him an orderly who had evaded the Turks and brought him intelligence that his right column, consisting of the Bulgarian Legion, was beset in Eski-Zagra by a force of Turks estimated at twenty thousand men. General Gourko, small as was his force, resolved on an attempt to succour them, and in the meantime determined to maintain his position, but his resolution quailed before the appearance of two massive columns of Turks marching on his flank and rear. He had to leave the Bulgarians to shift for themselves, and make good his own retreat through the difficult and narrow Dalboka Pass, and thence through the Hainkoi Pass, accomplishing his retreat on Thursday, 2nd August, amid cruel hardships. In the retreat the wounded died like flies from jolting and exposure. Hale men succumbed from fatigue and sunstroke. As for the Bulgarian Legion composing Gourko's right column, they, after advancing from Eski-Zagra ten kilometres towards Karabunar, found the enemy and were driven in. On the 31st July, after very hard fighting, the Bulgarians had to retire into the defile north of Eski-Zagra, and thence effect their retreat through the Shipka Pass. Of the severity of the fighting a judgment may be formed from the fact that of the Bulgarian Legion, which began sixteen hundred strong, only between four and five hundred reached Shipka.

The Russian cavalry is now all on this side of the Balkans. The Shipka Pass is strongly fortified and armed with twenty-eight guns and garrisoned by a regiment of the 9th Division. Two regiments hold the Hainkoi Pass, which presents a series of formidable defences. There are few troops for the present at Drenova and Gabrova. A brigade of the 14th Division is at Tirnova. Reinforcements are moving south to strengthen the detachments holding the passes. Cavalry is also advancing against Osman Bazar. In the fighting of the 30th and 31st July, General Gourko lost three thousand men, excluding the Bulgarian loss.

The Turkish Government, alarmed by the appearance of a Russian force south of the Balkans, summoned Suleiman Pacha, with the troops which had been operating against Montenegro,

and made him commander-in-chief of the army which was to defend Adrianople. The following letter, describing the new Turkish general, is from the correspondent accompanying his army —

«ADRIANOPLE, *July 24th* —The hero of the hour in European Turkey at this crisis of the country's danger is, without doubt, the victor of Montenegro, Suleiman Pacha. The difficulties thrown in the way of correspondents at Shumla following the military operations of the Commander-in-Chief are such that I naturally inferred similar restrictions would be imposed with the army of Adrianople, but I am glad to find, in an interview with Suleiman Pacha himself, this will not be the case. Fortified by a good introduction, I called upon him here, and he instantly relieved me of any other restraint than such a position would of necessity entail, and invited me to accompany him in the forthcoming operations. He was in the midst of soldiers encamped on the northern outskirts of the city near the old palace of the Sultans of Adrianople, which was until very recently the pride and boast of the place. Now it is in rapid progress of demolition, the materials as I write being carted away to aid in the fortifications around, which are fast being raised. Some fifty battalions are already collected here, the grass on the river's bank forming their bed, and the clear summer's sky above their only covering.

The General is hardly forty years old, a man of middle height, and for a wonder not inclined to corpulency, as appears to be the almost invariable effect of high command in Turkey. To look at his fair complexion, sandy beard and whiskers, and his grey eyes, one would almost imagine oneself in the presence of a migratory Scotchman bent upon amassing wealth in a foreign land, and that pure English with an unmistakable accent would proceed from out of his mouth, but no such phenomenon, unluckily for me, occurred, and instead the conversation was carried on in French. The General told me he was hard at work incorporating the new troops, whom he found on his arrival here, with his old soldiers from Montenegro, and forwarding them up to Jem-Zagra, near the terminus of the railway at Yamboli, where Reouf Pacha was at the moment. The news of the withdrawal from Eski-Zagra and Kezanlik, and the Shipka Pass, on the approach of the Russian advanced guard, had come in, and did not seem in the least to give cause for any anxiety, or to be unexpected by him. Various versions of the number of the

enemy who had up to this moment crossed the Balkans had reached him, extending from 8,000 to 30,000, but the latter seemed to be in excess of the real figure, and was extended over a wide area. That atrocities had been committed did not admit of a doubt, but they occurred out of the main body, and were committed, it was said, by isolated bands of foraging Cossacks, who were not the easiest of troops to tame and civilize, and also by Bulgarian Christians upon their Mohammedan fellows. Nothing of the kind had occurred at Kezanlik or Eski-Zagra, and as regards his own army and the Turkish troops in general, the strongest orders of which language was capable (and that is not without meaning in the land of the Sultan) had been issued to prevent the slightest excesses of the men, who were fully aware that the eyes of all Europe were upon them. In a very few days important operations would assuredly take place, in which the army of this part would bear a foremost part. More information was given which it would be imprudent to reveal, and the General invited me to accompany him to witness the march out of camp of ten battalions which were on the point of being sent by the railway to Jeni-Zagra. More than three-fourths of the men bore unmistakable symptoms of having gone through the campaign of Montenegro; the faces of the majority, naturally embrowned with the toil of the fields, had assumed a far deeper dye, comparing strongly with those of the half-drilled recruits—much so in face, but more still in uniform; the smartness, in comparison, of the one so recently turned out of the tailor's hands rendering still more marked the utter discoloration and dilapidated appearance of the other. The original colour and material were lost to all possible recognition, and many articles of attire—especially those considered by most nations as indispensable—had been attempted to be supplied wholly or in parts by any material which came nearest to hand. The dress of the officers shared in the toil-stained and tattered appearance of the men: but in many instances not the slightest attempts at uniform were made. One officer, and a most active and indefatigable one, on the General's own staff—a German by nationality—was fain to be content with a suit of brown holland, a counterpart of which may be met with in the shop-window of any cheap, but perhaps not fashionable, tailor at 15s. 6d.

The officers' call brought this incongruity of appearance into still greater prominence—in fact, one had reason to doubt if uniform, properly understood, existed in this portion of the Turkish army—and when they in their turn had assembled their men around them to communicate the orders of the

General, the variety of knapsacks, rugs, and general impedimenta of a soldier on campaign became another source of wonderment. When we hear of pay being an almost unheard-of novelty, clothing is a secondary consideration, and can well afford to be overlooked, especially when the large majority of the men are decorated for the two campaigns in Montenegro—the unsuccessful nature of the first being far more than counterbalanced by the brilliancy of the second. They are good soldiers, and tried indeed by every hardship, extremes of weather, and the utmost amount of privation. Proud indeed the General has reason to be of them, and he can rely on their making themselves a name amongst the myriads of the Czar now beginning to pour through the Balkans. But the order to march is given, the band plays its few wild notes as a prelude to the soldiers' shout—thrice uttered by the whole as one man—of "Long live the Padishah!" and onward they go to the defence of Islam.

The massacres which followed Suleiman Pacha's first successes exceeded even those committed upon the Bulgarians in May, 1876, and have made Eski-Zagra a name which will call up memories more terrible than those of Batak.

(HEADQUARTERS OF SULEIMAN PACHA'S ARMY, KARABUĞAR, *July 29th* —Up to the present time no military operations have taken place, but instead we have had a feast of horrors and atrocities. Not a day passes but reports arrive of excesses of every kind, and if even a tithe of them are true the war will soon become one of extermination, and the Eastern Question will have on the
as infam.

will be branded to the end of time. The passion of revenge once let loose amongst a barbarous people is not to be stayed by military mandates, no matter how severe the language in which they may be couched. It is to be hoped that the Russian Commander-in-Chief is in earnest in his desire to carry on the war in a civilized manner, and it certainly appears almost incredible to find the Turkish side professing to be horror-stricken at outrages which they have so lately been doing their utmost to palliate.

The first object I was taken to see on my arrival here was the severed head of a Bulgarian peasant which had just been brought in by a Turkish soldier who had himself performed the horrid operation in revenge for being fired at. The head was thrown into a ditch close to the station, and there

remained a ghastly object enough until some charitable person covered it with earth. Next seven spies, as we at first heard, but afterwards a civil staff officer informed us they were not spies, but Bulgarian insurgents who had been charged with having blown up a railway bridge across the river here, were brought to the place of execution, which happened, much to my disgust, to be two stunted trees—the only ones growing near—adjoining the modest shed in which I happened to be quartered. None of the unfortunate beings appeared to show the least emotion as they stood surrounded by a few dozen soldiers and bullock-drivers; and a rough but ready set of volunteer Calcrafts tied the ropes to the sparse branches of the trees, slipped the knots round their necks (excepting the last, an old man, who quietly performed that duty for himself, and sat down cross-legged on the ground, his eyes shut, murmuring what appeared to be a prayer, and patiently awaiting his turn), and, hauling them up, the end came almost without a struggle. Human life in Turkey, as in all other Oriental countries, is certainly taken and lost in a different manner to our own; but I never could imagine such a scene possible as this that I most reluctantly was called upon to witness. The train just starting for Adrianople has in it the body of a Mussulman split in halves, and otherwise mutilated in the most frightful manner, which Suleiman Pacha has sent to the Consuls there as a terrible proof of what the Russians and their followers are capable. A telegram from Reouf Pacha has just been shown to me stating that the inhabitants of five villages near Eski-Zagra have been slaughtered, man, woman, and child, three hundred and forty in number, by the retreating Russians. Within the next few days I shall have an opportunity, I trust, of making inquiries from the few survivors who have made their way in a lamentable state to Jeni-Zagra, whither our headquarters are now moving. Burning villages of the Christians are to be seen marking the line of march, and a spirit of ferocity has been stirred which will make the war a byword and reproach for many a year. The whole population is flying, and can be seen in countless thousands between here and Adrianople, with their miles of bullock waggons, containing their families and household goods, their cattle and sheep in common droves and flocks toiling painfully along in a vain hope of finding rest in a peaceful country.

CHAPTER XII

THE FIRST CHECK AT PLEVNA

The "Army of Rustchuk"—Russian Train Officers—A Reconnaissance on the Lom—An Unpleasant Position—Baron Krudener's First Attack on Plevna—Carelessness of Russian Generals—Preparations for a New Attack—A Ride through the Forepost Line—General Skobelev—A Council of War—Types of Russian Officers

FROM following the narrative of General Gourko's brilliant but barren expedition beyond the Balkans, we return to survey the situation of military affairs between that range and the Danube, where events were occurring which were to change entirely the character and prospects of the Russian campaign

* HEADQUARTERS 12TH CAVALRY DIVISION, HEIGHTS ABOVE LOM RIVER, *July 22nd*—When I came back to this division yesterday, I had been absent six days, in the course of which time I had ridden over three hundred miles, had wrecked my best horse, had been to Bucharest twice, each time for only a few hours, and had never taken my clothes off. There are no pretensions to a postal service in the Russian army in Bulgaria, and the only way in which the correspondent can forward his communications is simply to act as a courier as well as a correspondent. At length, the day before yesterday, having fed the voracious maw of the telegraph wire, I was free to return for a day or two to my quarters with the advance division of this army. Quitting Sistova in the morning, I rode first for Pavlo, where on the previous day but one I had left the Imperial headquarters, my subsequent route lying over Bjela, and along the Rustchuk road till I should find somewhere or other the people I was looking for. Pavlo, where two days before there had been the Emperor's headquarters, with a division encamped around the farmyard, in which the Czar of All the Russias had pitched his tent, was now solitary, forlorn, and desolate. The headquarters were gone, and nobody was left to tell whither. A calf stood ruminating in the verandah of the Bulgarian hut under which General Ignatieff was wont to do his leisurely writing, and dogs were poking about the ground which the dinner marquee had covered. The only

miscellaneous kind. There were draught buffaloes and milch buffaloes, buffalo calves, and old bulls, oxen, cows, sheep, and goats. But he was hard up for fresh meat himself nevertheless, and bought a leg of mutton from a predatory Cossack, who with a leer vouched for the fact that the sheep to which the leg had belonged had been captured from the Turks. It is needless to say that the camp of the train had no night watch set, and that no military precautions of any kind were taken.

At two in the morning, I renewed my journey long with the officers was a

Prussian, employed as armourer to one of the regiments which the train followed, and he told me I need have no concern, for notwithstanding the orders, there would be no march till daylight at the earliest. He was more than right. At eight o'clock, when I set forward, the camp of the train still lingered in the mud of the valley, the horses harnessed indeed, but the tents unstruck till the rain should have passed away.

I had left at Obertenk my division, my comrade, and my waggon, but at Obertenk now, which I reached about ten, tramping dismally on foot through the mud, and leading my lame horse, I found no cavalry division, but a small detachment of Cossacks, the escort of the headquarter staff of the Czarewitch, in command of the Rustchuk Army. He and his staff had their tents pitched in a shady garden, and in the tent of Colonel Dochtouroff, who is sous chef of the staff, I found Prince Dolgorouki, one of the aides de camp of the Emperor, who had the day before brought from the headquarters of the latter to the Czarewitch some good news concerning the passage of the Balkans. With Kezanlik in Russian hands, and the Slupka Pass open, all concern regarding the passing of the Balkans may be dismissed and with our knowledge of the whereabouts of the mass of the Turkish army, the date of the arrival of the Russians in Adrianople becomes merely a question of marching and of supplies. It must be owned that the Russians are buying their successes

to receive any firm assurance as to the immediate prospect of active measures against Rustchuk, and gathered, indeed, that the plan of action of the "Rustchuk Army" had not yet

been definitely settled; but on this subject I will speak later.

The whole army was forward toward Rustchuk, beyond Obertenik. On the heights above Damogila, a village to the south-east of Obertenik, I saw, as I rode onward, the white tents of the 35th Division. At Trestenik, a village close to the chaussée, about six kilometres beyond Obertenik, I found the headquarters of the Archduke Vladimir, commanding the 12th Army Corps. A division of this Corps—the 12th Division—was setting out on its march from its bivouac on the plateau beside Trestenik as I rode by. It is so rare to see a Russian column march in an orderly manner, that one observed with all the greater pleasure the marked exception which General von Firck's division offered to the customary style of marching. In the infantry column no straggling was permitted on the march; the men marched at ease, and without being locked up, but in order, and at a word the whole column could have pulled itself together. When a halt was made, always in the vicinity of water, so many men per company were allowed to fall out and go to fetch water for their comrades, so there was no wild straggling around the well or the fountain, as is so often the case, with consequent loss and soiling of a fluid which is exceptionally precious just now in this part of Bulgaria. A sentry was placed on the water to preserve order, with a picquet commanded by an officer near by. As for the reserve artillery and the train of the division, it followed with the utmost regularity under the superintendence of officers specially detailed for the purpose. The vehicles were not allowed to straggle all over the road, thus blocking the way for all waggons coming in an opposite direction; they were kept to their own half of the road, the drivers were made to keep up, so that there was no loss of distance having to be made up by jerking and fatiguing trots, and the men on foot accompanying the waggons were compelled to march alongside their own vehicles instead of straggling all along and all about the line of the column. It is curious to observe the difference between divisions in respect to observance of such matters of discipline as the preservation of order on the line of march and the keeping up of an efficient circle of night watches and field guards. This 12th Division, for instance, is as smart in these respects as any German division. I noticed while passing in its rear the other day near Kriuna that where roads bisected finger-posts were set up specifying the place to which each road led. Nowhere else have I seen with the Russian armies the adoption of this simple expedient, which helps so much orderlies and provi-

sion trains, and which is universal in the German army. There are divisions through which any one may ride without challenge, and to which any force might approach within rifle shot without observation. There are others which are surrounded by a ring of sentries and picquets—too near in most instances for purposes of efficient outlook, but still guarding to some extent at least against surprise. When I give the name of the general commanding the 12th Division—Baron von Firck—a nationality is indicated which renders needless any further inquiry into the reason of the efficiency of his command, but in most cases the chief of the staff is the man who influences the state of camp and marching discipline throughout a division which it must always be remembered is the true integer of the Russian military organization as it practically exists, the Army Corps being a thing *ad hoc*, of which this war is the first experience. I may mention one curious circumstance in the Russian army. The generals of brigade are mostly older than the generals of division. The

seniority rather than merit has been the principle of their appointment.

In the valley in which is situated the little wayside inn, or what once was an inn, bearing the outlandish name of Han Col Cisme, about twelve miles from Rustchuk, the 12th Division halted and I overtook my waggon. The infantry had pushed on the cavalry a few versts and General Driessen's headquarters were moving on to the heights where I am now writing. We are within four miles of the Danube at Pargos, which is due north from us, and just over the crest of the slope on the reverse side of which is our camp, is the valley of the Lom. We are rather crowded down in this corner between the Danube and the Lom. Cavalry and infantry camps are mixed up anyhow, and you might cover almost with a good sized towel the bulk of three infantry and one cavalry divisions. A glance at the map will show that the main river Lom, the Cerni or Black Lom entering the Danube at Rustchuk, flows down through Bulgaria in a direction nearly due north, bending to the north east as it approaches the Danube. Along its western bank is the present position of the Russian Army of Rustchuk. It covers a broad front, although the principal concentration is near the Danube. The right flank of its cavalry is at Polomarca, a village about forty miles south of the Danube in the direction of Osman Bazar, and regiments are studded among the

villages on the western bank of the Cerni Lom, all the way to Pirgos. The Beli, or White Lom, with a north-westerly course, flows into the Cerni Lom at the village of Kosova, and the triangular interval between the two rivers is occupied by detachments of cavalry belonging to the 12th and 8th Cavalry Divisions. In all, about 40,000 men are now on the Lom. This position has been gained without any fighting to speak of. There was a trivial cavalry skirmish on the height where I am now writing, and within sight of my tent door are the graves of a few dragoons who fell in clearing the crest of the Turkish troops. Two days ago there was a more serious skirmish down in the Lom Valley. There is a village called Kadikoi, about midway between the Lom and the road between Rustchuk and Shumla. There was reason to believe that Turkish troops were there in some force, and from the heights on this side the Lom, the Russians opened fire with one gun, with intent to provoke reprisals from the enemy, and so gain some idea of his strength. But the Turks were wise, or at least wily, in their generation. They replied with one gun. If the Russians had brought two into action no doubt they would have followed suit; but in the meantime a fair exchange was enough for them.

Emboldened by this seeming weakness, a couple of squadrons of Bilderling's dragoons were pushed across the Lom in the direction of Kadikoi. They advanced some distance, but not to glory. They had passed through a swarm of Circassians, lying in ambush, and suddenly the two squadrons were beset, surrounded, and assailed with great fury. It remained for them but to fight their way back, which they did with a hard hand-to-hand struggle, losing some nine men killed and twenty-one wounded. The killed were brought into camp across their horses, for the Russians will not, if they possibly can help it, leave their dead to the certain fate of being mutilated by the Turks. The Circassians followed the dragoons across the Lom, hanging on their rear, and trying to cut off detached parties; but they came a little too far. A battalion of infantry had accompanied the cavalry as far as the Lom, and had remained on this side. So when the cavalry came back thus sore beset, the infantry were ready to cover them, and the Circassians found themselves exposed to the withering rifle-fire which it has since been ascertained caused them a loss of twenty men killed and fifty wounded. Subsequent appearances indicated that Kadikoi and its vicinity had been evacuated by the Turks, and to make this certain a reconnaissance was conducted in that direction by the Archduke Vladimir himself, at the head of a squadron of dragoons, a

squadron of Cossacks, and a battalion of infantry. He penetrated to Kadikoi without opposition, and found it empty and deserted; so he determined to take the opportunity that offered, and make a bold dash at the railway between Rustchuk and Shumla. His Cossacks rode on through Buzin, and struck the railway at the Guvemli station. This they burnt, and blew up with dynamite an adjacent bridge, thus effectually destroying the railway communication between Rustchuk and Shumla. Not a man was lost in this brilliant little undertaking.

There can be no doubt that the Turks, having behaved very well during their retreat so far from Sistova, and throughout this portion of Bulgaria generally, have at length given rein to their fury against the Bulgarian inhabitants of the Lom Valley. The evidence is overwhelming that this is so. I am not fond of accepting hearsay evidence in such matters, and habitually allow a good deal of margin for exaggeration. But when villages are entered with slaughtered men, women, and children lying about among the ashes of their houses; when Bulgarian husbandmen are found dead in the fields, shot apparently when labouring at their daily toil; when at the well, close to which I am writing, a Bulgarian was found desperately wounded, with the cross scored by transverse sword-cuts on his forehead; when eyewitnesses tell me all this, I am bound to believe them. There is a village called Kaceljevo, some distance up the Lom. In this village was lying Colonel Bilderling, commanding a regiment of dragoons of Arnoldi's brigade. He left the village on a reconnaissance down the river, and there were then in it about a hundred live Bulgarian villagers—men, women, and children. During his absence a detachment of Turks, whom the Bulgarians who escaped reported to have been under the command of a superior officer, entered the village. Most of the helpless inhabitants fled for refuge into the church, which is a large and handsome edifice. The door of it was broken open by order of the officer commanding the Turks, who entered and slew and spared not one of the unfortunate inmates. Not a soul who had taken refuge in the church escaped. Bilderling came back at night to find Kaceljevo empty and desolated, and its church a shamble. Then a few people who had not gone into the church, but had sought hiding-places in the gardens round the village, came in scared and trembling, and told him what had happened as far as they knew. For the rest, the spectacle in the church told its own story. My informant is Colonel Bilderling himself, and his commanding officer, the Baron Driesen, has

made a report of the occurrence just as I have told it to you. I do not see what room there can be for question that this fearful story is but too true.

There have been occasional indications of an imminent battle on this front, but they have always faded away into disappointment. I think it may now be taken for certain that the Turkish troops have broken up from the Lom line, and have abandoned the cohesion with which they were credited. It may be assumed that a certain proportion have drawn in toward the fortified positions of Rustchuk—in fact we can see their camps on the slopes of the Levant Tabia—and that another portion have fallen back in another direction, probably in the direction of Shumla—it may be, however, in that of Osman Bazar. They have uniformly declined to stand, even when the pressure has not been heavy; and it cannot be said that any vigorous attempt has been made to get to close quarters with them. Simply by the *vis inertia* of the impending advance of great masses the Turks have given ground, and the line of the Lom may now be said to be clear. *Et après?* Well, I am no believer in an early siege of Rustchuk. I see no indications of a siege. I find no artillery park on this side the Danube, nor any preparations being made to bring any across. I believe that for the immediate future the military policy is simply to mask Rustchuk, and hold a force in readiness to strike wherever a blow or a demonstration may be of service in Bulgaria; to march east and give the hand to Zimmerman at Silistria, should he be threatened from Shumla; to proceed against a field force marching from Shumla against the troops masking Shumla; in fine, to be available for anything that might turn up. Just at present, were the enemy any other enemy than the Turk, a fine chance seems to offer itself to enterprising leaders of delivering a telling counter-attack athwart the line of the Russian communications. A cavalry force crossing from Silistria to Kalarash might strike into Roumania, destroy the village, and do incalculable damage, and that with but little opposition, for the Russians seem to have left Roumania strangely bare of troops. But from the Turks a raid of this kind is not to be expected, and the Russians seem to have accepted what is said to have been Prince Bismarck's advice, and put all their eggs into the basket which they have so successfully carried across the Balkans. It seems pretty certain they will carry the eggs unbroken into Adrianople. He would be a rash man who would speculate on what may result on the Russian occupation of Adrianople. This afternoon General Driesen came to our tent, and,

informing us that, he intended to ride along, and perhaps outside, the foremost line along the river Lom, gave us the opportunity of accompanying him. Indeed, he carried his kindness so far as to lend me a horse my steed being *hors de combat* from overwork. It appeared that two reconnaissances were designed—one, consisting of some hussars and Cossacks and a battalion of infantry, under the command of Prince Woronzoff, was to start from Solemk, on the White Lom, and push on northward to Pizanca, on the Rustchuk Shumla road, which it was then to follow as far as Buzin, behind Kadikoi, and as much further as the Turks would permit, the other, consisting of two squadrons of dragoons, commanded by the chief of General Driesens staff, was to start from our camp here, and, passing through Pargos was to feel the Turks to the westward of the Rustchuk position on the high ground near the river side. A battery in front of our position here, and another above Pargos were to cover the latter reconnaissance and reply to any Turkish fire which might be directed against it. This is rather pottering work for the front of an army of some 70,000 strong, but it was at least better than inaction.

We rode away to the eastward over abruptly undulating downs, alternated with corn fields, and got down into the rocky and tortuous valley of the Lom, at the beautiful village of Buzisma. The forepost line reached to the river, but did not cross it. The downs were dotted all over with field watches, and there was almost a row of sentries along the edge of the high ground overhanging the river. Behind, admirably posted, were strong picquets, composed of all three arms of the service—a squadron of cavalry, a half battalion of infantry, and a battery of artillery constituting the complement of each. Strangely enough, there were no cavalry vedettes, and this method of outlook seems sparsely used in the Russian army. We found a good many of the Bulgarian inhabitants in the village of Buzisma. The houses were somewhat dismantled, but the harvest was gathered into the farmyards. All the live stock had been driven away by the Turks, as was to be expected. We found the inevitable Russian soldier bathing in the Lom—he would bathe although the opposite bank might have been lined by Circassians. We did not cross the river, but rode back on to our heights, and took a long, careful survey of the ground on the other side. There lay the white houses of the village of Kadikoi, which, although occupied yesterday, has not been held. Looking across the level north eastward toward Rustchuk there loomed against the sky line the elevated position of Said Pacha,

crowned by its earthwork redoubt, and with its slope clustered thick with Turkish tents. The redoubt of Said Pacha is one of the outlying works of the Rustehuk fortified position, and directly in front of the great centre of that position the lofty plateau of the Seventh Tabia. But the scene was perfectly quiet, and there were no signs of Woronzoff's reconnaissance. So, turning our horses' heads, we rode northwards towards the chaussée along the forepost line. On the chaussée we found a Russian battery in emplacements, the gunners waiting for the order to commence firing, for from the top of the ridge opposite, on the further side of a deep, bare, and rather wide valley, a Turkish battery had come into action, firing at the Russian battery above Pirgos, which had been the original aggressor in support of a reconnaissance made by Driesen, chief of the staff. The two batteries were blazing away at each other vigorously, while behind us all the troops in the position had formed up and were waiting for orders; but no orders came. The affair was confined to a duel between the two batteries. On the slopes below the Turkish battery we, looking across the valley at our feet, could see cavalry manœuvring. Two clumps stood fast, and small parties and single horsemen moved about among the main fields without apparently any very definite purpose. My belief was that these people were Russian cavalry, operating slowly up the slopes, and feeling their way beyond the Turkish battery. Anxious to see how the dragoons were working, I rode through the infantry forepost line below our battery, and down into the valley, whence I began to mount the opposite slope with intent to join the horsemen above. But they were not our horsemen at all; they were Circassians circling about there by way of making a demonstration. I became aware of the fact that I was approaching a hostile force in no very pleasant manner. Along the slope which I was mounting, and in front of the Circassians, ran the Turkish infantry forepost line—some scattered picquets linked by a few sentries. These were hidden behind the stacked sheaves of grain, and I did not perceive that there was any such line until a fellow fired at me at a range of not beyond three hundred yards. Another followed suit, and I thought then that I had persevered quite long enough in that direction, and, having discovered my mistake, turned and galloped back down into the valley. But other Turks began to fire, and then the Russian forepost line set about replying while I was down in the dip between the two lines, and the bullets of both parties whistled clear over me. It was not so much an unsafe as an uncomfortable position, for I could not get back in the face of the Russian

fire, and of course I could not go forward. I remember once being in a similar fix when travelling in Catalonia, when I chanced into the heart of a skirmish between the Royalists and the Carlists. There — — — an awkward locality, so I Russian forepost line ; when, of course, I was promptly taken prisoner as a suspicious person apparently coming over from the enemy. By this time the force in the valley in which I had left General Driesen had come into action, and another from the other side of the river, but the fire died out when the sun went down, and no bones were broken.

The following letter presents a summary view of the situation of the Russian army in Bulgaria in the fourth week of July, and briefly mentions Baron Krudener's first check at Plevna, the precursor of so many misfortunes, described in subsequent communications —

* *BJELA, July 23rd* — On the 19th the Russians sustained a severe check, if not an actual defeat, at Plevna. General Schilder, with a portion of the 9th Corps, consisting of an infantry brigade with cavalry and artillery, was sent against the place and seems to have approached it in a slovenly manner. The Turks took the offensive and repulsed the Russians with heavy loss. It is understood that Baron Krudener, commanding the 9th Corps, will be superseded, and it is believed that the 9th and 11th Corps will be formed into a separate army under Prince Schahofskoy, to operate in the west against Widdin. Orders have been sent to the 9th Corps in the meantime to take Plevna, and tidings of the result of the new operations are now being waited for. The 4th Corps will follow the 8th Corps across the Balkans.

The Russian Army of Rustchuk has advanced to the line of the Lom River, touching the Danube at Pargos, and is slowly wheeling on that pivot to invest that fortress. Nearly forty thousand men are now jammed into the angle between the Danube and the Lom. The Turks have abandoned the line of the Lom without fighting, and one part is believed to have retired on Rustchuk and another to have fallen back on Shumla. The Grand Duke Vladimir two days ago pushed a cavalry reconnaissance through Kadikoi, and on to the Rustchuk and Shumla Railway at Guevli, where he cut the telegraph wires, tore up the rails, and blew up the bridge on the line with dynamite. Several isolated skirmishes have

occurred, in one of which a detachment of Russian dragoons was roughly handled and lost a good many men. There was some artillery fighting near the Danube yesterday, in which a battery on the Roumanian side took part, and this morning the bombardment of Rustchuk from Giurgevo has recommenced. When the bombardment from the Bulgarian side will begin it is difficult to say. The siege train is on its way, but it crosses at Simnitza, a fearful way round. Supplies are difficult, as the base of the whole force now in Bulgaria is still Simnitza, where there still is but one bridge. An early attempt is expected to drive the Turks now around Rustchuk into their fortified defences, but the investment of the place is not yet imminent, as the progress of the troops destined for that purpose is but slow.

The headquarters of the Grand Duke Nicholas remain in Tirnova. The Czarewitch has his headquarters at Obertenik. The Emperor, with his suite, is in Bjela. The Turkish inhabitants are slowly returning to Bjela and reoccupying their houses, after having suffered terrible hardships in the woods. All report that they left their homes on a stringent order issued from Constantinople. In the Dobrudscha General Zimmermann has mastered the whole line of the Tchernavoda Kustendjie Railway after some fighting. His object is Silistria. The health of the army remains good. In the 12th Corps not two per cent. are sick.

I understand that there are no objections in the councils of the Russian headquarters to give fair consideration to propositions for peace made at the present juncture, if they are of a reasonable and satisfactory tenor; but that there can be no question as to the direct advance with all due speed on the Turkish capital if the Turks do not avert this movement by suing for terms which will give satisfaction to Russia. Neutral Powers cannot fail to recognize that the present is a favourable moment for giving strenuous advice to Turkey to be wise in time. The Bulgarian volunteers are being equipped with arms and uniform, and drilled to act as gendarmerie all over the occupied district.

* OBERTENIK, *July 26th*.—It was expected that to-day at length there would have been something of great interest to report from the Rustchuk Army. All was ready, and to-day was the day named for the decisive movement, but everything stands fast in compliance with positive orders from the superior headquarters in Tirnova. The reason for these restraining orders as regards the Rustchuk Army is not far to seek. The 11th Corps, having crossed the Danube at Simnitza, was on

the march in the direction of Shumla, and had already made progress in that direction nearly to the Upper Lom, when the mischance at Plevna to a portion of the 9th Corps arrested the advance. Prince Schahofskoy, commanding the 11th Corps received orders to march across country from east to west and co operate with the 9th Corps in renewed operations against Plevna, the 9th Corps marching southward from the direction of Nicopolis. The 11th Corps was last night at Bulgarenî, two days' march from Plevna. In three days, at the outside, there must be heavy fighting there.

Plevna is believed to be held by a large portion of the Turkish army of Widdin, with Osman Pacha himself in command. Now is the time for the Roumanians to make a serviceable diversion in favour of the Russians by crossing the Danube about Widdin, it would be preferable below the fortress, and threatening the Turkish communications between Widdin and Plevna. The 4th Corps will support the 8th Corps in the invasion of Turkey beyond the Balkans. In Kezanlık there are now
and
adva

Between that town
line of intended
men who have

crossed the Balkans by different passes, from the Hainkoi Pass on the east to the Shipka Pass on the west. This is a mixed mass of regiments from divers corps, under the command of General Gourko. The 8th Corps has one division. The 9th is in Shipka. The other is partly through the Balkans, partly in the passes. Eski Zagra is in Russian hands and Yamboli is so reported also, but this is not certain. No time will be lost in pushing forward, but the delay is occasioned by the difficulty of getting artillery and supplies through the passes.

Around Rustchuk the Turks are now committing terrible atrocities in the Bulgarian villages. In Kadikoi I have myself seen the bodies of massacred men, women, and children. On the other hand, arms have been entrusted to the Bulgarian mountaineers between Turnova and the Balkans and on the mountains and they are abusing badly their new liberty and their unaccustomed weapons. The Russian Cossacks get the blame of the Bulgarian outrages. Within the sphere of my observation on the foreposts about Rustchuk, the Russian troops are behaving with great self-restraint. The Turks taken red-handed in outraging and massacring are brought before a superior officer and then hanged. At Pirgos this morning a marauding Turk suffered this fate after having been tried and evidence heard last night by General Driesen. To day direct communication by

pontoon boats, not a bridge, will be opened across the Danube between Pirgos and Parapan. The Emperor remains in Bjela.

† BUCHAREST, *July 29th*.—I have just received the following from your Special Correspondent at the Russian headquarters:—"I have just come from Tirnova, where the Grand Duke's headquarters still remain. Preparations are being made there for the Emperor, whose arrival is expected shortly. Two triumphal arches had been erected, the materials for decoration being collected from the inhabitants in the following manner:—Waggons drawn by oxen and attended by police were driven through the streets, and received what contributions were forthcoming, such as carpets, coloured cloths, &c. The arrival of his Majesty is looked forward to with great interest by the Bulgarian population. The municipal organization is going on rapidly. The native police are already established with a special uniform. The Turkish inhabitants begin to take heart, and come into the town with produce from the country round. Cossacks and Bulgarian patrols bring in Turkish prisoners daily. Last Wednesday five hundred Turks were brought in from the front, amongst them several officers, under escort of the Cossacks and Bulgarian troops. The Grand Duke Nicholas examined the officers, and was surprised to learn that they had not received any pay for many months. The Russians seemed to have pushed on a little too far into the interior without sufficiently assuring their right flank, and consequently now find it necessary to rest on their oars a bit before advancing the main column further. It is probable, however, that the advance guard of Cossacks may push beyond Jeni-Zagra; but no doubt the headquarters of the Grand Duke will remain at Tirnova until the country on both sides of the Danube road of communication is thoroughly secured against the enemy. Last week the Turks evidently had the idea of cutting this communication from Plevna, where very severe fighting took place. The Turks are stated to have been nearly 30,000 strong. The Russian loss is reported very heavy. I was told at Simnitz bridge that 400 Russian wounded passed over on Thursday. Had this attempt on the part of the Turks succeeded, it would have placed the Russians in an awkward position."

The following letter describes the preparations for the second attack on Plevna, under Baron Krüdener and Prince Schahofskoy:—

* PORADIM, July 30th — Coming into Bjela from the foreposts in front of Rustchuk on the 27th inst, I learned of the movement against Plevna, the details of which I have already communicated by telegraph. Knowing that until the completion of that operation the movement for the investment of Rustchuk would stand arrested, and realizing of what importance it was that the right flank of the Russian advance to the Balkans should be cleared of the danger which undeniably threatened it by the concentration at Plevna of a large Turkish force flushed by the success achieved over the previous unfortunate effort to take and hold that place made by a portion of the 9th Corps, I at once determined to join the force moving on Plevna. I was indebted to General Ignatieff for a note of introduction to Prince Schahofskoy, commanding the 11th Corps, a portion of which was engaged in the operation, and my companion and myself started on the long journey in the afternoon of the 27th. We reached Pavlo the same night, and bivouacked in a Bulgarian farmyard, where milk was procurable for ourselves and fodder for our horses. As far as Pavlo the road was familiar to us, but next morning we plunged into a *terra incognita* with only the map for our guide. Of the maps of Bulgaria which I have seen all I can say is that the best are bad. They are but blind guides, and the Bulgarian peasants whom one questions as to the route have no idea either of distances or of points of the compass. They reckon by hours and with most irritating looseness. "How far to Akcair?" "Two hours, sir." "What direction?" A wave of the hand to the right, and an indescribable howl, is the answer. You ride on for an hour, and encounter another peasant. "How far to Akcair?" "Three hours!" "What direction?" A wild, indefinite wave of the hand to the left front, and a howl as indescribable as the previous one, is the reply of this exponent of local geography. If you desist from inquiries, and try marching by the map, you find yourself trusting to a broken reed. The most detailed map of the theatre of war is the map of the Austrian military staff, but its details are too often erroneous. It lays down a road where there is not even a cart track, and transposes villages in the most free-and-easy manner.

On all the maps is depicted a broad road, a main highway running between Plevna on the west, and the Jantra at Kosovo on the east. It was our aim to strike this main road, once on it we could no longer be in doubt as to our route. We searched for it first in Burunli. It was not there. Nobody had ever heard of it. The map made it

running through the village of Akcair, but the only roads about Akcair were mere cart tracks. At Studeni, although according to the maps that village stood on it, all declared it to be a myth. We found a road leading from Studeni, and determining to follow it were comforted by the assurance of a marketender I met that Tirnova, not Plevna, was its objective. In despair I made a sort of cast, as a huntsman might whose hounds are at fault, and quite casually, in the middle of a plain, I found the road. It had been wonderfully well made for a Turkish road—a ditch cut on either side, metalling laid down on its surface, and nothing was wanting to constitute it a highway but traffic upon it. But tall grass grew through the stones upon it, and grass obscured the profile of the ditches. I do not believe that a wheeled vehicle had ever passed along it. It is a road which to all appearance has no *raison d'être*, carefully avoids the villages, and accommodates nothing and nobody. My idea is that the Turks, in some sudden spurt of ardour for keeping up with the times in matters military, had been advised that a great military road athwart Bulgaria, from Widdin to Shumla, would be a valuable work, and that accordingly the section of it between Plevna and the Jantra was taken in hand. Made, it has never been used. Farther on we found that the bridge over the Osma, the only stream the road encounters, had fallen by natural decay, and that on the other side the villagers were reaping a hay crop on the road; so we lost sight of it for miles, and only picked it up again within a few kilometres of the village in which we found Prince Schahofskoy quartered for the night, the village of Karajac Bugarski.

The 11th Corps, of which he is the chief, has had a chief share of the hard work of this campaign, with as yet but little of the glory of the fighting. The 11th Corps was the first to cross the Pruth and occupy Galatz. War was declared on the 24th April, and on the afternoon of that day a detachment of the Cossacks, attached to the 11th Corps, and led by Colonel Strukoff, streamed over the Reni road, and picqueted their horses on the heights of Barbosch. It seems a year ago, although only three months, since I called on Prince Schahofskoy to ask for permission to visit his camps round about Galatz. The corps stood long at Galatz and Braila while the invading army streamed round and over it. It made pontoons for bridges by which it was not to cross. It made batteries for the siege guns at Braila, whose gunners, not belonging to it, were to earn honour and glory by the destruction of the *Lutfi Djelil*. It made the preparations which facilitated the later crossing at Hirsova of troops

belonging to another corps. It built and armed batteries at Oltenitza, and stood the brunt of the return fire from the sharpshooters and cannon of Turtukai. It constructed the siege batteries on either flank of Giurgevo, and conducted the futile and thankless bombardment of Rustchuk, about which so much ink has been wasted. Crossing the river at Simnitza the corps marched on Tirnova and hopes rose high in its ranks that for its soldiers no more would be the function of hewers of wood and drawers of water, but that they would cross the Balkans and see fighting and earn glory and crosses among the rose gardens of the Tundja Valley. These hopes were shattered. A day's march from Tirnova the corps was ordered to bend to the east and take up a defensive position on the line of a Turkish march from Shumla over Osman Bazar against Tirnova and the Russian communications between that place and the Danube. Well here at least was the chance of a fight, for the Turks were reported in force at Osman Bazar, and Schahofskoy had permission to march thus far in search of an enemy. But on the 20th inst. there came to the 11th Corps the order for yet another long march. "We are the football of the army," said an angry officer to me whom I met on the road. I tried to console him by the remark that it was rather an honour than a hardship to be selected for exceptionally arduous duties, and that further, a fight clearly awaited him in this last expedition. The corps has already earned a marching reputation at least. A glance at the map will prove what splendid marching it has been to make the distance from Kosarevac some twenty miles east of Tirnova, to the vicinity of Plevna, in six days and that in the intense heat of the summer. In the divisional hospital of the 32nd Division, into which I looked at Bulgaren on my way to Prince Schahofskoy's headquarters, I found evidences of the severity of the long march. Several men were down with sunstroke, and there were cases of violent fever accompanied by delirium, brought on doubtless by the quick change of temperature from the burning heat of the days to the cold chills of the nights.

As I sat under the verandah of a hut talking with Prince Schahofskoy there came towards us through the dusk of the evening a form which seemed curiously familiar. There flashed through my mind the question—*Que diable êtes vous venu faire dans cette galère?* as I instinctively rose to greet one who seemed to me no other than Colonel Frederick Marshall, erstwhile chief of the Horse Guards Blue, now one of the aides-de camp to the Duke of Cambridge. I was wrong. It was not my gallant English friend, as good a cricketer as he

is a soldier, but his Russian double. There was a good precedent for my error. Is it not told among the stalwart troopers of the Blues how, when after the Salisbury Plain manœuvres the Count Protassoff-Bachmeteff entered the Albany-street barracks in plain clothes, the guard turned out to him under the belief that it was their own colonel who was entering? At that time Count Protassoff was the colonel of the Russian Garde à Cheval as Marshall was colonel of our Horse Guards! Another curious link in the coincidence of the striking resemblance. The Wiltshire rustics have not till this day forgotten the imposing figure, clad in scarlet, and wearing a burnished helmet crowned by a golden eagle, whose splendour eclipsed all the varied glories of the foreign officers on the day of the great review at Beacon's-hill which concluded the manœuvres which were our first and last attempt at the practical imitation of real warfare. Count Protassoff is no longer chief of the Garde à Cheval, he has now the rank of major-general, and he belongs to the suite of the Emperor, but is attached to the headquarters of the 11th Corps for this expedition. To him belongs much of the merit of having introduced into the Russian army the system of regimental messes, copied from the pattern of the English system *mutatis mutandis*, of the details of which Count Protassoff made himself master during one of his visits to England. A long gossip over autumn manœuvres helped to while away the evening.

In the dead of night that extraordinary fellow General Skobelev the younger turned up in Prince Schahofskoy's headquarters. He is the stormy petrel of the Russian army. If I were riding along a road in a given direction in expectation of seeing a fight, and if I chanced to meet young Skobelev riding in the opposite direction, without any inquiry or any hesitation I would wheel my horse and ride in Skobelev's tracks, in the full assurance that I was doing the best thing for myself and your readers. He is in the thick of everything. In the grey dawn of the morning of the crossing I shook hands with him on the edge of the bank of the Danube after the bayonet charge in which he had taken part. His face was black with powder, and he, general as he is, carried a soldier's rifle, with the bayonet fixed. He was in the fighting at the Shipka, and led the first column which traversed that pass. There seemed some prospect of quietude for some days on the other side of the Balkans, and the Plevna expedition offered a prospect of fighting. Skobelev is unattached, and can rove from flower to flower, from one fighting ground to another. He is, I sometimes think, a little mad,

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but a man of real value in a kind of warfare such as this. It would be embarrassing if every general were a Skobelev, but a few Skobelevs scattered up and down through a great army have their uses. They generally end by getting shot, and earn a short memoir and a good many decorations. But I hope it will be a long time before Skobelev meets his inevitable doom, for he is a right good fellow, and a staunch comrade. He came to us from Baron Krudener's headquarters, with instructions that he should take the temporary command of Colonel Tutolmin's brigade of Circassian Cossacks, who have also been attached to this expedition, and execute a reconnaissance in the direction of Loftcha. He rode off in the darkness, and came back last night, after having ridden about fifty miles, with the tidings that Loftcha was held by five battalions of Turkish infantry, and its rayon infested by Circassians and Bashli Bazouks.

On the morning of the 29th Prince Schahofskoy and his headquarters moved from Karyac Bagarski, and first went forward some distance on the direct road towards Plevna. We passed the cavalry foreposts, and advanced indeed into the vicinity of Grivica, without seeing anything of the enemy. It surprised me not a little to find ourselves faithfully followed at a very short interval by the whole of the headquarter baggage train. Now, the headquarter baggage train of a Russian general commanding an army corps and his staff is no light thing. Lord Albemarle tells us that in 1828, in the Russian column which crossed the Balkans under General Diebitsch, every general officer had his caleche. With the present Russian army, it is not alone that every general officer has his carriage—most have more than one—but the larger proportion of field officers have vehicles also. On this staff there is a baggage waggon between every two officers, and a surprising number of miscellaneous vehicles besides. The chief of the artillery has a travelling chariot drawn by four horses, driven after the manner of a four-in hand with us. Servants swarm, and every servant contrives to find a place in or on a vehicle of some kind or other. The staff train is half a mile long if it is a yard, to say nothing of escort, marketenders, and the priest, who rides in a vehicle of his own. A train such as this must always be a great embarrassment and impediment, in an advance with favourable means of communication it is an encumbrance, in retreat, along bad roads, it must be a nuisance of the most abominable character, and fancy it following the staff beyond the foreposts! One great want in the Russian army on the march is that of a skilled and efficient field gendarmerie to regulate the trains, preserve the

order of march, see that intervals are properly maintained, that ground is not lost, that straggling or irregular practices do not occur, and to clear the way of civilian traffic in front of an advancing column. Nothing could be more admirable than the manner in which these varied and important functions are performed by the German field gendarmerie, a picked corps, with numerous experienced and carefully trained officers, and the non-commissioned officers and men of which consist of stanch and trusty old soldiers who can be thoroughly depended on in every emergency. There is a field gendarmerie service in the Russian army. Its men wear a blue uniform with white aiguillettes. I saw them in considerable strength about the streets of Kischeneff: I have seen very few of them since. Now and then a field gendarme may be found jogging along with a column, but assuming no responsibility, charging himself apparently with no duty except that of getting forward, and unheeded by any one, the meanest waggoner, who in the German army would tremble at a glance from a field gendarme, taking no account of the Russian policeman in the blue coat with the white cords. There is not a single field gendarme with the headquarter train of Prince Schahofskoy. Order is not its strong point, and that it is badly superintended, or not superintended at all, is obvious from the manner in which it wandered after us on through the forepost line. It was countermarched with some precipitation when the chief turned his horse's head and rode backward within his own forepost line. Then we rode—and it followed us by a zigzag track through some very pretty country, where were numerous villages, and where haycocks stood thick in the fields, and corn-stacks in the village farmyards—to the bivouac ground in one of the tents of which I am now writing.

All night long we lay on the grass with tents struck and horses saddled, waiting for an *alerte*. It was believed that it was the intention to make the attack to-day, and that the preliminary positions were to be taken up under cover of the darkness. Fires were made up as if the army were remaining in its positions, with intent to delude the enemy, if it were not too great a compliment to pay to the Turks to suppose that they would be on the outlook for any such indications. We waited orders from General Krüdener, but they came not. About midnight two officers rode to him from Prince Schahofskoy, and brought back instructions that he meant to delay the attack, partly because some of the troops had not come up far enough, and partly to rest the whole after their long and fatiguing marching. So about four o'clock in

the cold grim morning we pitched tents again, unsaddled the horses, and lay down on our cloaks for a long unbroken welcome sleep. The delay in this case I do not believe to have been dangerous. Undoubtedly the troops were sorely worn with incessant marching, and the cavalry horses were almost exhausted. One great anxiety was relieved. Reports were brought in that no more Turkish troops were marching from Plevna on Loftcha. This removed apprehension of a flank attack in force from Loftcha on the left of the Russian converging assault upon the Plevna position. Krudener and Schahofskoy were now free to concentrate their attention on the latter place, leaving cavalry to watch Loftcha.

This morning there was a thunderstorm, which broke nearly over us, and every man had to stand to his horse to pacify him when the thunder rattled and the lightning flashed. Stampedes are by no means confined to Aldershot. We had one with a vengeance the other day on the heights of Obertenik, among the horses of the Oldenburg regiment of heavy dragoons, in Baron Driesen's division. It was brought about by a sudden thunderclap. The Russians do not picquet their cavalry horses, but merely tie their halter-ropes to a continuous cord, stretched on upright stakes. With one accord, two squadrons on the hill top broke away, and dashed at a headlong gallop in the direction of the Turkish forepost line, which was not above four miles distant, in the direction of Rustchuk. They galloped through a battery of artillery, whose guns stood unlimbered on the crest a little farther on. The artillery horses, used to loud noises, made no attempt to stampede, but remained quietly munching their hay under the thunderstorm. The gunners caught a number of the troop horses, and the infantry forepost line secured a number more, but sixty horses got clean away, and, without slackening speed, galloped right in among the Turks, who took no measures for their restoration. Some days later an officer of the regiment, when in Kadikoi on a reconnoissance, found several of the runaway horses lying dead there. Apparently they had been overridden, and not fed at all, and so had fallen down and died. I suppose the picqueting question is by this time a weariness of the flesh, but I should like to say that, having recently seen nearly every modern system in practice, including that in use among our Indian troops, it seems to me that the practice of the Belgian cavalry is infinitely the simplest. In their stables and stationary horse-lines they have fixed picquet pegs with rings at the top. These pegs are morticed into stone, and it is beyond the power of any horse to draw

them. All young horses are of noises are made to scare draw their pegs, but in very prolonged and energetic action they recognize the immovability and cease to attempt the manœuvres a comparative quite effectual; the horse piequet peg is not to be done rather a rash experiment experience proves that if an officer will gather together in his command, and give a stampede by any expedient. You may throw a handful of them, and they will be frightened all over, but will not draw their pegs, although a comparative effect of doing so. The officer sent out their horses to graze together; but when on picket ponies at all, but fasten them to the saddle, and, thus secure fast till he died of exhaustion a year to starve him. thoroughly inured to privation of killing. Mr. Weller explained a biological fact of the rarity of ponies come within the scope of the would have coupled them.

This afternoon there has been at one o'clock the generals, some of the force under Prince Gortchakoff, at this bivouac to receive explanations of the tactics of the offensive to-morrow. It was a fine display of diverse types of Russian

refined school are simply charming, full of a spontaneous courteous bonhomie which at once puts a man at his ease, fair linguists, men who have travelled, and mostly know Courts, and who are full of consideration and kindness. I am not sure that modern soldiering is their strong point. The gentlemen of the young cultured and scientific school, with the Military Academy badge on their breasts, are very much of the type of our Engineers, a little priggish in their way, slightly mysterious over trifles, which they choose to regard as secrets, dry in manner for the most part, but when you come to know them downright good fellows, whose friendship is a privilege. It is in holiday time, or about the fag end of an adverse battle, that I should like best to meet a batch of youngsters belonging to the fifth school. I have seen them with assiduous one wishes them
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To day, on the windy plain, outside the tent, were representatives of all these types. The grey bearded, hard-faced old major who, without "protection," has fought his sturdy way up through the grades with long delays, much hard service and many wounds. He was an ensign in the Crimea and afterwards was forgotten for Heaven knows how many years in some odd corner in the Caucasus. He is only a major, but he has half a dozen decorations, and, please God, he will gain another to-morrow, if he has the luck to stand up. He is as hard as nails, and would as lief live on biscuit and junk as on champagne and French cookery. There is little in common between him and the tall, stately, grizzled general, an aide de camp of the Emperor, a man of the Court, yet who has never forsworn the camp, a man who will discuss the relative merits of Patti and Lucca, who has yachted in the Solent and shot grouse in the Highlands, who wears his decorations too some of them earned in the forefront of the battle, others, honorary distinctions, as marks of Imperial favour. He can gallop, can this young hussar in the blue and red, he can cut the sword exercise, he can sing French songs of a somewhat improper character, he can pick up a bottle of champagne between his teeth, and holding it there let the contents run down his throat, he would give his last cigarette either to a comrade or to a stranger like myself, he has the portraits of his mother and of a French *honne* of the demi monde on his bosom, and in his secret heart he has vowed to earn the St. George to-morrow. I don't know that I quite like Lieutenant Brutokoff yet. I know the first time I met him I disliked him down to the ground. His manners

—well, he had none to speak of—and his voice was a growl, with a hoarseness in it begotten of schnapps. He did not look as if he washed copiously, and was the sort of man who might give some colour to the myth that the Russian has not yet broken himself of the custom of breakfasting off tallow candles. But he turns out a good fellow on further acquaintance, and is no niggard with his raki. There are in the throng young officers who would be a credit to any service in Europe. One, the Count Keller, not yet thirty, but a lieutenant-colonel, I became acquainted with first one bleak day on the uplands before Saitchar, when he was leading a little column, of which he had the command, against a Servian village held by a detachment of Turks, whom he drove out with skill and daring. Baron Krüdener drives up and is greeted by Prince Schahofskoy, his brother corps commander. There is a brief interval of hand-shaking and general conversation, and then all stroll toward the farmyard of a Bulgarian cottage. The generals and leading staff officers gather close into the wide clay-floored porch, under the spreading roof, and there, standing in a group, pore over maps and discuss the plan of operations. The other officers stand in knots about the farmyard, or sit on the shafts of a cart, waiting for the detailed instructions to them which will follow the settlement of the general arrangement. The Turks are reported standing fast; their positions are known to be strong; the orders to the Russians are to succeed, cost what it may. Seldom, to alter Macaulay's line, have I promise seen of such a bloody fray. To-morrow's sun will set on smoke and fire, and all the lurid grandeur and horror of a battle-field.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE GREAT RUSSIAN REPULSE BEFORE PLEVNA.

The Russian Forces and their Leaders—The Bivouac on the Eve of Battle—Faulty Dispositions of the Russian Army—The Attack—Capture of the first Turkish Position by Schahfokoy—Its Recapture by the Turks—Krudener unable to advance—Disastrous Failure of the Attack—Advance of the Turks—The Bashi-Bazouks after the Battle—Retreat of the Defeated Army.

THE following letter describes the attack on Osman Pacha's position at Plevna, made by General Krüdener and Prince Schahofskoy on the 31st July, twelve days after the first Russian attempt to take that place. The whole of this letter was

transmitted by telegraph, and appeared in the *Daily News* of August 3rd —

* PORADIM, BEFORE PLEVNA, August 1st — The previous affair at Plevna had been the only serious reverse the Russians had encountered in the European campaign, but it had been very serious, and as an aggravation it occurred through neglect of common military precautions. When the commander of the 9th Corps proceeded against Nicopolis he made the omission of protecting his flank by not sending cavalry to occupy Plevna, then only weakly held. Afterwards an easy chance did not offer. The Turkish column from Widdin, marching too late to succour Nicopolis, turned aside and occupied Plevna. With intent to repair the blunder General Krudener sent three regiments of infantry against Plevna and without a previous reconnaissance. These, after hard fighting, actually occupied the town. They had laid aside their cloaks and packs in the streets, and had quitted the fighting column formation, believing all was over, and were singing as they straggled along. No patrols had been pushed into the recesses of the town. No cavalry had been sent forward beyond the town. The Turkish columns were to a degree. The Russian troops had closed the windows and doors. The Turkish troops had the troops straggling along the streets. They were beset on all sides, and had to retreat. One regiment left its packs where they had been taken off in the street. During the retreat, more or less precipitate about 2,900 men were lost. One regiment lost nearly 2,000 men. The retreating troops witnessed the butchery of their wounded. On the 22nd Prince Schahofskoy received orders to leave in position at Osman Bazar two infantry brigades, and march on Plevna, right across the theatre of war from east to west, with one cavalry brigade and one infantry brigade of his corps. The 30th Division of the 4th Corps who were crossing the river at Simnitza, en route for Tirnova, were ordered also on Plevna, to stand under Schahofskoy's orders. The 9th Corps, about and in front of Nicopolis, was ordered to co operate in a combined movement against Plevna. The regiments which suffered in the previous affair clamoured to lead the vanguard of the renewed attack. Riding across the country from the Rustchuk front I overtook Prince Schahofskoy on the evening of the 28th, about twelve miles due east from the foot of the Balkans in six days. Regiments of infantry streamed through the village in the dusk amid clouds

of dust, and tramped on to take up their bivouac for the night on the downs beyond, the cavalry brigade covering the front further in advance. Reconnaissances had been pushed forward, which proved that the work in hand was no child's play. Plevna was reported to be occupied by the whole of Osman Pacha's army from Widdin, which strengthened by troops from Sophia and others coming from the late Montenegrin campaign, was in all believed to be from 35,000 to 40,000 strong. The Turkish intrenchment line ran through a series of villages lying in a semicircular order round Plevna, at a distance from it of about five miles and touching the river Vid on both flanks. A strong Turkish advance force was reported at Grivica on the road along which lay Schahofskoy's line of advance. From north to south the villages of the Turkish forepost position were as follows—Plizitza, Bukova, Radisovo, Tucenica, and Bogot. Schahofskoy was, as I have said, in the village of Karajac Bugarski. His brother corps commander, Baron Krüdener, was for the night in the village of Kalisovit, on the road from Nicopolis to Plevna, and about eight miles north-west of Schahofskoy's headquarters. As senior general Krüdener was nominally in chief command of the whole of the operations, but he acted under peremptory instructions from the Grand Duke Nicholas in Tirnova.

In the night of the 28th the younger General Skobelev reached Prince Schahofskoy's headquarters from Tirnova, appointed to the temporary command of the Cossack brigade in the force of the Prince. He received instructions to march his brigade to the southward, and occupy, if possible, the town of Loftcha, an important position between Plevna and the Balkans—a hazardous expedition, conducted along the face of a hostile front, and likely to meet with resistance en route, and also at the point of destination. But Skobelev galloped off with a light heart on this dangerous duty. I spent the night in the house of a very intelligent Bulgarian who had been an agent of the American Bible Society in Plevna. In answer to my remark that the Bulgarians on this side of the Balkans seemed a thriving people and not suffering severely from oppression, he stated that until 1866 Turkish rule in Bulgaria was light and tolerant. Then the Circassian settlers were introduced, and with them came lawlessness and anarchy. He attributed wholly to the Circassians the impending ruin of the Turkish power in Europe. But in quiet times the Bulgarian villagers who were wise generally found means of averting trouble from the lawless Circassians. They made regular presents—paid a sort of light tribute—to the priest of their village, who used

his influence with the Circassians to avert their exactions and lawless acts. It is undeniable that for years past committees have existed among the Bulgarians in favour of insurrection and subscriptions made to this end. He himself had been president of one of these committees. This ramification coming to a head last year had alarmed the Turks and led to stern repressive measures, but from these the Bulgarians north of the Balkans had in a great measure escaped, and to the last they had remained substantially unharmed.

On the morning of the 29th Prince Schahofskoy quitted Karajac Bugarshi, and made a reconnaissance along the road towards Plevna, in the direction of Grivica, where the Russians killed in the previous attempt still lie unburied. His march lay over beautiful grassy downs and through little wooded valleys. The Turks were not seen, but cannon fire was heard to the south in the direction of the march of Skobelev on Loftcha. Retracing his steps, and bending to the southward, Schahofskoy bivouacked for the day on a plain near the village of Poradim, with a brigade of infantry in front. Another brigade marched up into line at our quarters of the previous night. The Russian front was thus widely extended, aiming at a concentric attack on the Plevna position, much in the manner practised by the Prussian Guards in retaking Le Bourget, but of course on a much larger scale, and including an attempt at wholly enveloping the enemy's position by cavalry operating on both flanks.

Such dispositions demand time, and accordingly we spent the remainder of the 29th in a pleasant but anxious inactivity in the Poradim bivouac, where hay and water were plentiful, and where the neighbouring village actually afforded wine. Patrols pushed forward, touching the Turks at Radisova, Tucenica, Bogot, and Slatina. At night Skobelev came in with the intelligence that Loftcha and the intervening villages were strongly occupied, and the Turkish force there-

ned. About dusk began to
rowful company of Bulga-
the road between Loftcha
Turkish troops. Women

came wailing a mournful dirge for their slaughtered dead left behind in the abandoned village homes. A waggon rolled along with a weeping woman in front. Behind was stretched at length her husband, hacked, and scored, and slashed till I wondered how a spark of life yet lingered in him. One hand was half severed at the wrist, not by a sweeping sabre stroke, but as if dissection had been attempted with a blunt knife. His throat was hacked in a similar fashion. His forehead

and chest were scored with transverse slashes. He was reported to be a victim of the Circassians. Further on, amid a crowd of weeping women, lay a Bulgarian in the last agonies. He had been almost scalped, and then an attempt made to cut his head off. It was not worth while bringing him along, for he must have been hopeless from the first, and he died while we stood looking on. He had come by his death at the hands of civilian Turks abiding in the same village. Fugitives narrate numerous slaughters of men, but that no women or children were touched. I am not fond of hearsay evidence, and prefer the evidence of my own senses. It is on this latter evidence that I testify to what I have written above, and also to the murders in the village of Kadikoi before Rustchuk. Still, the killing seems exceptional, and the regular Turkish troops are never accused of acts of violence. The blame is always ascribed to the Circassians and the Bashi-Bazouks.

The night between the 29th and 30th was spent with tents struck and horses saddled, waiting for the order to advance, in anticipation of the commencement of fighting at sunrise; but Baron Krüdener had determined to wait yet a day longer to perfect his dispositions and give the troops, fatigued by severe marching, some rest. The 30th was therefore spent in inaction, except that the troops were somewhat drawn forward to be within striking distance for the morrow. Tidings came that no more Turkish troops were marching from Plevna on Loftcha, which simplified matters, since fewer troops were required to watch the latter place. A general council of war was held at Poredin on the afternoon of the 30th, at which were present Baron Krüdener, Prince Schahofskoy, and the generals of division and brigades. The colonels of regiments and staff officers waited to receive instructions as to the final dispositions. It was settled that the action should begin next morning at five o'clock by a general concentric advance on the Turkish positions in front of Plevna, and that Prince Schahofskoy and the general staff should move forward at four o'clock. Several aides of the Grand Duke Nicholas arrived, and were detailed to various points to make observations, and after the battle to carry reports of the results back to Tirnova. The gravity of the task before the army was fully recognized, for reconnaissances had proved the Turks to be in greater force than was at first believed. Twenty thousand regulars had come from Widdin. The Turkish positions were known to be strong by nature, and strengthened yet further by art. The night between the 30th and 31st was very wet, and troops did not begin to march forward before six instead of four.

The number of infantry combatants was actually about 32,000, with 160 field cannon and three brigades of cavalry. Baron Krudener was on the right with the whole of the 31st Division in his fighting line, and three regiments of the 5th Division in reserve at Karajac BugarSKI. He was to attack in two columns, a brigade in each. On the left was Schahofskoy with a brigade of the 32nd Division and a brigade of the 30th Division in fighting line. Another brigade of the 30th Division was in reserve at Pelisat. The Turkish position was convex, somewhat in horseshoe shape, but more pointed. Baron Krudener was to attack the Turkish left flank from Grivica towards the river Vid. Schahofskoy was to assail their right from Radisovo, also towards the river Vid. On the left flank of the attack stood Skobeleff, with a brigade of Cossacks, a battalion of infantry, and a battery, to cope with the Turkish troops on the line from Plevna to Loftcha, and to hinder them from interfering with the development of Schahofskoy's attack. On the right flank stood Lascareff, with a brigade of the 9th Cavalry to guard Krudener from a counter flank attack.

The main fault of the dispositions was that Krudener and Schahofskoy were practically independent of each other, that the two attacks were too far apart, and without a connecting link, but the gravest evil, which did not rest with the commanders on the spot, was the weakness of the assailing force. After the attack, the Turkish forces have been left to chance, and the Russian attack the Turks in a strong force or numbers. The falseness of the economy stands proved to day, when yesterday's defeat makes the Russian hold in Bulgaria extremely precarious, and must compel the withdrawal of troops from some other point where they are nearly as badly needed, to beat the Turks at Plevna, and beaten they must be, and that speedily, if the risk is to be averted lest the Russian army be forced to retire ingloriously into the Principalities.

Preparation for the infantry was to be made in regular form, but the artillery preparation loses much of its value when delivered against constructed positions spread widely. Krudener's blunder had given the Turks time to intrench themselves, nor had they neglected the chance.

The morning was gloomy, which the Russians regarded as a favourable omen. The troops cheered vigorously as they passed the General. Physically there are no finer men in the world. In the pink of hard condition, and marching without packs, carrying only great coat, haversack with rations, and ammunition, they seemed fit to go anywhere and

do anything. Schahofskoy's right column marched over Pelisat and Sgalince. The left column headed straight for Radisovo. The artillery were pushed forward from the first, and worked independently. Marching forward, we found the cavalry foreposts on the sky-line above Pelisat, and on the sloping downs infantry deployed as they advanced, as the Russian practice is on open ground. The formation was in column of double companies, with rifle company in front of each battalion. The line and rifle companies have the same weapon, the *Kranke*. The rifle company is made up of marksmen whose rifles are sighted up to 1,200 yards, whereas the line is only to 600, the maximum fire-range of the Prussian infantry in the Franco-German war. Krüdener, on the right, opened the action at half-past nine, bringing a battery into fire from the ridge on the Turkish redoubt above the village of Grivica. At first it seemed as if the Turks were surprised. It was some time ere they replied, but then they did so vigorously, and gave quite as good as they got from Krüdener. The objective of Prince Schahofskoy, with whom I rode, was in the first instance Radisovo, and it behoved us therefore to bear away to the left. But before doing so we were for a short time in a position which afforded a wonderful view of the theatre of action.

Plevna is in the hollow of a valley, lying north and south. The ground which intervened between us and this valley was singularly diversified. Imagine three great solid waves with their faces set edgeways to the valley of Plevna, and therefore end on to us also. The central wave is the widest of the three, and *à cheval* of it are the main Turkish positions, of which there seem three, one behind the other. Although the broadest wave, it is not the highest. The right and left waves are both so high that one on the crest of either can look down across the intervening valleys into the positions of the central wave. But then the Turks are astride of all three waves. The crest of our wave, the ridge above Radisovo, they do not hold in force. Thus far we are fortunate; but on the most northerly wave of the three, that against which Baron Krüdener is operating, and which is broader and flatter than ours—more like a sloping plateau, if the expression is not a bull—the Turks have intrenched position behind intrenched position. Both on top of this ridge and of the central swell we can discern camps of Turks with tents all standing behind the earthworks. It is clear they don't intend to move if they can help it. Their tents stand as if they had taken a lease of the ground in perpetuity. Baron Krüdener's cannon are in action, not only in front of Grivica, which is the toe of the

horseshoe, but against its northern flank also but the return fire is so heavy that he makes no way, and for the time, at least, is fast held. We try to aid him from the crest of our ridge by bringing a battery into action against the Grivica earthwork, but the traverse of the redoubt is so high that we do no harm. We of the left column have our own business to attend to, and so we leave our casual outlook place among the plum trees and move on in the direction of Radisovo.

This village lies in a deep valley behind the southern wave or ridge of the Turkish position, and there is another ridge behind this valley. On that ridge our cannon, placed by Colonel Bischofsky, chief of Prince Schahofskoy's staff, were firing in line on the Turkish guns on the ridge beyond the valley, with fine effect. The infantry went down into the valley under this covering fire and I accompanied the column. We carried Radisovo with a trivial skirmish for in the village there were only a handful of Bashi Bazouks who standing their ground, were promptly bayoneted. The Russian infantry remained under cover of the village. I returned up the slope to our batteries. These, firing with great rapidity and accuracy, soon compelled the Turkish cannon to quit the opposite height. During the last spurt of their firing Prince Schahofskoy rode along the rear of our batteries, from the right to the left, under a fire which killed two horses in our little group. Our cannon playing on the Turkish guns on the opposite ridge quelled their fire after about half an hour's cannonade and it was then practicable for our batteries to cross the valley passing through Radisovo and come into action in the position vacated by the Turkish guns, and following them our infantry also descended into the hollow, and lay down in the glades about the village, and on the steep slope behind our guns in action.

Presently we had five batteries ranged along the crest of the ridge beyond Radisovo, directing a converging fire on the Turkish guns on the central wave or ridge beyond. Notwithstanding their exposed position their fire was heavy and steady. The row of cannon in action reminded me of the German batteries on the crest of Verneville on the day of Gravelotte, only that the Germans had ninety cannon engaged and we had but forty. The staff awaited the result of the preparatory cannonade on the ridge behind Radisovo. I went forward again and got up to where our batteries were in action, and there lay down. On the way I passed through Radisovo, into which were falling many Turkish shells, which flew over the ridge occupied by our cannon. It was passing strange to witness peasant villagers standing in bewildered groups in

front of their houses while shells were crashing into the place, while the children played unconcernedly about the dustheaps, and enjoyed themselves without misgiving as to danger. For once Bellona was gracious to non-combatants. Not a single villager was injured by the shell fire, although several hundred shells must have fallen in the village. From my point of vantage with our batteries I could look right down into the Turkish positions. Four batteries were defending the earthwork about the little village which seemed to me to be the foremost of their fixed and constructed positions on the central ridge. It stood on a little knoll, and was well placed for searching with its fire the valleys by which it could be approached. Beyond were more, and yet more, earthworks right to the edge of the broad valley, where the roofs and church towers of Plevna sparkled in the sunshine from out a circle of verdure. The place had an aspect of serenity strangely contrasting with the turmoil of the cannon fire raging in front of it. It seemed so near that a short ride would have brought me there to breakfast, yet ere we could reach it many men were to die. Men were dropping fast around me in the battery already, for the position of the guns was greatly exposed and the Turkish practice was mostly very good.

By this time, one o'clock, our infantry had nowhere been engaged. The operations hitherto were confined to the artillery. Krüdener on the right flank had scarcely progressed at all, and his co-operation in a simultaneously combined attack on both flanks was indispensable to success. Would that Schahofskoy had but acted on a full recognition of this fact, which the obvious strength of the Turkish positions should have impressed on him. Krüdener had gained much less ground than we. He seemed little farther forward than at the commencement, whereas we were at comparatively close quarters, and within striking distance. Krüdener was behind, either because his attack was not pushed energetically, or because he was encountering obstacles with which we had not met. Now Krüdener is regarded as a slow soldier and unenergetic man. We swore at what seemed his inertness, but it was not swearing only. Schahofskoy, in his impatience, determined to act independently, and strike the Turks single-handed. If Krüdener was slow, Schahofskoy was rash. If the whole force was too small for the work, how much more so was one-half that force? Fearful was the retribution exacted for that error of judgment.

About half-past two the second period of the battle commenced. To ascertain whether the artillery had sufficiently

prepared the way for the infantry to act Schahofskoy and his staff rode on to the ridge where our batteries were firing, and had to dismount precipitately under a hurricane of shell fire which the Turkish gunners directed against the little group. A long and anxious inspection seemed to satisfy Schahofskoy and the chief of his staff that the time had come when the infantry could strike with effect. This conclusion was arrived at in the face of the fact that we of the left flank attack had but three brigades all told, one of which constituted the reserve. In other words, we were about to launch ten or twelve thousand men against commanding intrenched positions held by an immensely superior force, and no whit crushed by our preliminary artillery fire. I will now quit criticism for narrative.

Two brigades of infantry were lying down in the Radisovo valley, behind the guns, the 32nd Division—General Tchekoff's bri-

forward through the glen and up the steep slope beyond, marching in company columns, the rifle companies leading. The artillery had heralded this movement with increased rapidity of fire, which was maintained to cover and aid the infantrymen when the latter had crossed the crest and were descending the slope and crossing the intervening valley to the assault of the Turkish position. Just before reaching the crest the battalions deployed into line at the double, and crossed it in this formation, breaking to pass through the intervals between the guns. The Turkish shells whistled through them as they advanced in line, and men were already down in numbers, but the long undulating line tramped steadily over the stubbles of the ridge, growth on the descent beyond.

out in advance. The fighting a time, till, what with impatience and what with men falling, it breaks into a ragged spray of humanity, and surges on swiftly, loosely, and with no close cohesion. The supports are close up, and run up into the fighting line independently and eagerly. It is a veritable chase of fighting men impelled by a burning desire to get forward and come to close quarters with the enemy firing at them there from behind the shelter of the epaulement.

Presently all along the face of the advancing infantrymen burst forth flaring volleys of musketry fire. The jagged line

hour from the shelter trench before they again converged and made their final rush at the main earthwork. This time the Turks did not wait for the bayonet points but with one final volley abandoned the work. We watched their huddled mass in the gardens and vineyard behind the position crisscrossing the narrow track between the trees to gain the shelter of their batteries in the rear of the second position.

So fell the first position of the Turks. Being a village it afforded ample cover, and Schahofskoy would have acted wisely had he been content to hold it and strengthen it till Krudener, on his right, should have carried the Grivica earthwork and come up in line with him. But the Grand Cross of St. George dangled before his eyes, and tempted him to rashness. Krudener was clearly jammed. The Turks were fighting furiously, and were in unexpected force on that broad central ridge of theirs, as well as against Krudener. The first position in natural as in artificial strength was child's play to the grim starkness of the second on that isolated mamelon there with the batteries on the swell behind it. But Schahofskoy determined to go for it, and his troops were not the men to balk him. The word was again "Forward!" The first rush, however, was out of them. Many must have been blown. They hung a good deal in the advance, exposing themselves recklessly, and falling fast, but not progressing with much speed. It is a dangerous time when troops sullenly stand still and doggedly fire when the stationary fit is on them. Wyndham knew what it meant, and gnashed his teeth in rage over it when the fate of the Redan hung in the balance which one rush would have turned for us.

Schahofskoy kept his finger well on the throbbing pulse of battle. Just in the nick of time half his reserve brigade was thrown into the fight immediately below us while the other half took part in the attack more on our left flank. The new blood tells at once. There is a move forward, and no more standing and craning over the fence. The Turks on the flank in the earthwork are reinforced. I had noticed some Turkish officers on horseback, standing coolly behind the bank of the vineyard that serves as a parapet to the prolongation. They ride off and speedily return, with an addition to the defending force. I can hardly say how it all happens, but all of a sudden the white smoke spurts forth all along the lip of the epaulement, and swarms of dark-clothed men are scrambling on to it. There is evidently a short but sharp struggle. Then one sees a swarm of men flying across the green stretch of the vineyard. But they don't go far, and

Krankenträger swarmed over the battle field in the shape of Bashı Bazonks, who smote and spared not. Languishing there on the ridge till the moon rose, the staff could hear from down below on the still night air the cries of pain, the entreaties for mercy, and the yells of bloodthirsty fanatical triumph. It was indeed an hour to wring the sternest heart. We stayed there long to learn if it might be what troops were coming out of the Valley of the Shadow of Death below. Were there indeed any at all to come? It did not seem as if it were so. The Turks had our range before dark, and we could watch the flash of flame over against us, and then listen to the scream of the shell as it tore by us. The whizzing of rifle bullets was incessant, and the escort and the retreating wounded were often struck. A detachment of cavalry at length began to come straggling up to take over from the staff the forepost duty on the ridge, but it will give an idea of the disorganization to say that when a company was told off to cover somewhat the wounded in Radisovo, it had to be made up of the men of several regiments.

About nine o'clock the staff quitted the ridge, leaving it littered with groaning men, and moving gently lest we should tread on the prostrate wounded. We soon lost our way as we had lost our army. We could find no rest for the soles of our feet, by reason of the alarms of the Bashı Bazonks swarming in among the scattered and retiring Russians. At length at one in the morning, having been in the saddle since six on the previous morning, we turned into a stubble field, and, making beds of the reaped grain, Commander, Correspondent, and Cossack alike rested under the stars. But we were not even then allowed to rest. Before four an alarm came that the Bashı Bazonks were upon us and we had to rouse and tramp away. The only protection of the Chief of what in the morning was a fine army was now a handful of wearied Cossacks. About the Bashı-Bazonks there is worse to tell. At night they worked round into Radisovo, and, falling upon the wounded there, butchered them without mercy.

Krudener sent word in the morning that he had lost severely, and could make no headway, and had resolved to fall back on the line of the river Osma, which falls into the Danube near Nicopolis. There had been a talk, his troops being fresh of renewing the attack to day with his co-operation, but it is a plain statement of fact that we have no troops to attack with. The most moderate estimate is that we have lost two regiments—say 5,000 men—out of our three brigades, a ghastly number, beating Eylau or Friedland. This takes no account of Krudener's losses. We, too, are to retire on the

Osma river, about Bulgareni, and, to the best of our weak strength, cover the bridge at Sistova.

One cannot in this moment of hurried confusion realize all the possible results of this stroke, so rashly courted. Not a Russian soldier stands between Tirnova and the victorious Turkish army in Loftcha and Plevna. Only a weak division of the 11th Corps stands between Tirnova and the Shumla army. I look on Schahofskoy's force as wrecked, as no longer for these many days to be counted for a fighting integer. It is not ten days since the 30th Division crossed the Danube in the pride of superb condition. Now what of it is left is demoralized and shattered. So on this side of the Balkans—the 8th Corps being already committed to the mountains—there virtually remain but the 9th Corps, already roughly handled, once at Nicopolis and again previously at Plevna, one division of the 11th Corps, and the Rustchuk Army. Now if the Rustchuk Army is marched to the west against Plevna, then the Turkish Army of Rustchuk is let loose on the Russian communications to Tirnova. One cannot avoid the conclusion that the advance over the Balkans is seriously compromised. The Russian strait is so bad that the scattered detachments have been called up from out Roumania, and a Roumanian division, commanded by General Manu, which crossed a day or two ago at Nicopolis, has been called up to the line of the Osma River.

An aide-de-camp of the Grand Duke Nicholas was present at the battle, and at once started for Tirnova with the evil tidings. We are just quitting this bivouac and falling back on Bulgareni with all speed, leaving the Bulgarian villages to the tender mercies of the Turks. As I close I learn that on our left General Skobelev was very severely handled, having lost three hundred men out of his single infantry battalion.

The following letter describes the state of the defeated Russians the night after the battle :—

* BUCHAREST, *August 2nd*.—It was the evening of the battle of Plevna. The sun was going down behind the smoke-mantled heights, in a glow of lurid crimson. The dusk was fast settling on one of the bloodiest battle-fields of the century—closing in round the batteries whose guns were still firing, round detached parties of Russian soldiers who were doggedly maintaining the fight against the swarms of Turks who formed a ring around them, firing fiercely into their midst—round the dead and the wounded lying thick on the stubbles, on the

grassy slopes, in the hollows among the maize plants and the oak copses—round the knots of wounded who had crawled for cover to the leeseide of the grain stacks on the fields, and who lay there in the unspeakable agony of waiting for the inevitable doom which they knew too well was to befall them—round the groups of miscreants tramping about the battle field intent on wreaking that doom on the defenceless wounded, and stopping ever and anon to perpetrate some barbarity Prince Schahofskoy and his staff stood on the summit of the ridge above the village of Radisovo, which was crammed with wounded men. The fate of the battle had hung in the scale for some time, but now all hope of success had gone. There was no reserve among us in the acknowledgment that the attack had been a failure, all the concern now was to do what was possible towards minimizing the results of that failure. There was no conversation, men's hearts were too heavy for talk. We sat about on the knoll, gazing down into the pandemonium below. The General, alone and apart, paced up and down a little open space in the oak copse, gloom settled on his face. All around us the air was heavy, having limped or selves down them-
There was l but a

waterless village, and what water trickled in a tiny rill from the fountain behind the village was struggled for eagerly by the parched and fevered wounded who crowded around it, coveting with a longing, the agony of which the reader can never know, a few drops of the precious fluid. I cannot tell when I most respect and admire the simple honest Russian soldier—whether when he is plodding along without a murmur verst after verst, under a burden just double in weight that which our soldiers carry, cheering the way as he tramps with a lusty chorus, or when, with cheers that ring with sincerity, and with an alacrity which is genuine, he presses forward into the battle, or when he is standing stubbornly confronting his enemy, conscious of being overmatched, yet never dreaming of running away, or when he is lying wounded but uncomplaining helping his neighbour in the same plight with some trifling act of tender kindness, and waiting for what God and the Czar shall send him, with a patient, un-murmuring calm that is surely true heroism.

The darkness closed in around us and the enemy seemed bent on following the example of the darkness. We had been on this ridge for a long time beyond the range of the enemy's batteries, but now these were advanced, and we were once

more under fire. Through the darkness we could see the flashes of the cannon shots; they must be back now in the position on the knoll below—the position where four hours ago the Russian soldiers had charged home with the bayonet, and whence two hours ago the Russian cannon had been firing. A second more, and nearer and nearer came the whistle of the shells, with a swiftly gradual crescendo into a scream as they sped over us and crashed down into the village in the valley behind us; and yet nearer there was the flashing of the musketry fire in the darkness; one could watch the streaks of flame foreshortened down in the valley there, and nerves tried by a long day of foodlessness, excitement, fatigue, and exposure to sun and the chances of the battle-field, quivered under the prolonged tension of endurance, as the throbbing hum of the bullet sped through or over the straggling group. No man dared to say to that stern lowering chief, eating his heart there in the bitterness of his disappointment, that it was a bootless tempting of fortune to linger longer on this exposed spot, nor did any man care to quit for the sake of greater safety the companionship which had endured throughout the day. So we lingered on till our senses became dulled, until some dropped off into slumber, regardless of the scream of the shells and the hum of the bullets. It was a humane object which so long detained the General in a position so exposed. There was no force available to line the height and cover to ever so little extent the wounded lying on and behind it from the Bashi-Bazouks, who too certainly were prowling in the vicinity, and ever coming nearer and nearer. An attempt had, indeed, been made to get together a detachment of infantry for this purpose, and a bugler, at the General's order, persistently sounded the assembly, but the result was merely to gather a handful of stragglers from half a dozen different regiments; and although but a company was wanted, that trivial strength could not be collected, so the General, his staff, and his escort took up for the time a kind of informal forepost duty, and there we waited till the pale calm moon rose and poured the sheen of her white radiance over the battle-field. While it was yet dark there had been no cessation of the firing, both artillery and musketry, and now that heaven was holding a candle to hell, the fire waxed warmer and brisker. Up from out of it, with broken tramp, came a detachment, silent, jaded, powder-grimed. There could not have been a company all told; a lieutenant marched at its head, and it was the remnant, so far as could be gathered the sole remnant, of one of the finest regiments of the 32nd Division, that had crossed the

ridge over which its debris was now listlessly trailing itself
three fine battalions strong

At length the jungle of cavalry accoutrements was heard, and a squadron of dragoons rode on to the heights, and extending in skirmishing order relieved the headquarter staff. It was a poor screen to interpose between a victorious and remorseless army and a mass of wounded men, but nothing more was available. The General had lost an army, the fragments of an army had lost their General. We turned the heads of our jaded horses, and, silent and depressed, rode down the slope across the valley and up the slope beyond. But on me fell the burden of a personal anxiety. I had missed my young friend Vilhers, the artist of the *Graphic*. He had been with me till darkness on the ridge. Soresly fatigued, he had expressed a desire to go away. I had advised him to get on the slope behind the ridge, and to take some rest. But when we rode away I could nowhere find him. I quartered the slope carefully and shouted his name aloud, but without result. Recumbent men by the dozen I looked into the faces of by the moonlight, but they were all wounded soldiers. At length a Russian told me he had met Vilhers some time ago in the bottom of the valley, when he had said he meant to go into Radisovo and try to be of some use among the wounded. Then he was with the doctors, and, as I trusted, would take no harm, although occasional shells were still falling in Radisovo. So trying not to think about him, I rode on with the staff. Our pace was a slow walk, for there were wounded men everywhere, limping along the narrow pathway in front of us, prostrate on the grass by the side of it, or asleep in the very dust. Occasionally we struck detachments of infantry who had scrambled back out of the fight, and were lying on their arms in utter ignorance of the best direction in which to march. Or it might be a battery of artillery, halted in perplexing dubiety whether if they went on they might march into the bosom of the Turkish army. I believe there existed some intention that we should go for the night to a village called Bogot. But we got confused as to the road, and bewildered by the crackling spurts of musketry fire that broke out all around in the most uncomfortable fashion. Were the Turks then wholly round us, that we heard, and occasionally felt, fire as it seemed to north, to south, to east, and to west? Once such was the confusion that we were fired upon by a detachment of Russian troops, halted in equal bewilderment with ourselves, and expecting an enemy from any or every side. We made halt after halt, but there never was rest for us. A

spurt of near firing would stir us, or a Cossack would ride in with intelligence that the Bashi-Bazouks were prowling near by, and through all this harassment there yet lingered with the most sanguine of us the idea that the battle would be resumed next morning, we affording an artillery support to the supposedly fresh troops of Krüdener. Where, I asked myself, is our artillery to take orders for such a purpose? We did not know where we were ourselves, much less where the army was, of which this groping, forlorn, dejected band were the headquarters. Of Krüdener's experiences or whereabouts we knew simply nothing. It was useless to despatch aides-de-camp or orderlies without being able to give them a direction in which to ride. All we knew was that ever there were wounded men about us, and that we and our horses were dead beaten.

Nature will assert herself. About one o'clock in the morning we turned aside into a field where the barley had been reaped and piled into small stacks. These we tore down, shook some sheaves out as fodder for our horses, and others as beds for ourselves, and, throwing ourselves down, fell into dead slumber. But there was no long rest for us. At three o'clock we were aroused by the tidings that the Bashi-Bazouks were close to us, and the near firing told of the accuracy of the statement. We huddled a number of wounded into and upon some carts which came up casually, and started them off, whether in the right direction or not we had no conception. Ugh, how miserably raw and chill struck the bleak morn just before the dawn! But if the rawness of the air struck to our marrow, hale and sound men as we were, what must have been the sufferings of the poor wounded, weakened by loss of blood, faint in the prostration which follows so inevitably the gunshot wound; foodless, without water, lying on the damp grass by the wayside in their blood-clotted clothes! Yet happy were they, pitiable as was their plight, in comparison with their fellows who had littered the battle-field, and had been left behind in Radisovo. The fate of the former we knew from what we had ourselves seen; of the latter, it was told to us by scared messengers that the Bashi-Bazouks had in the dead of night worked round our left flank, and had fallen upon them and butchered them in their helplessness. The horror of the news thrilled us all, but the tidings had for me a special agony of apprehension. For it was to join these wounded that Villiers was on his way when last seen, and there fell upon me the terrible fear that he had been with them when they met their cruel fate. I dared not follow out the reasoning; I recoiled from

that with unutterable horror, and yet I groped around the edges of the fearful problem to which I was tethered and could find no escape. I thought of the quiet London home under whose roof tree I had sat and listened to a mother talk with joy and pride of an only son of whose safety she professed to feel assured while he was with me and there rose before me the ghastly horror of the terrible duty that must devolve upon me to plunge that home into an abyss of unspeakable woe. There remained but one hope. We had trusted to meet at the Poradim bivouac, should chance separate us. I spent the morning riding about inquiring of every one I met if my friend had been seen. The reply was ever in the negative. I reached Poradim to find the headquarters camp struck and withdrawn and only a few lagging stragglers on the broad common. I waited there long in vain at length the sense of another personal duty asserted itself and with hope all but quenched in my heart I turned my horse's head and rode away to Sistova. Travelling thence to Bucharest I was the bearer of the bitter news to the little English coterie in the Roumanian capital and there was cast upon it the shadow of a great sorrow, for Villiers had lived there some weeks before we crossed the Danube together and to know him was to love him. On the evening of the day of my arrival some of us were sitting in sad conclave trying to hope against hope when the lad walked in among us safe and sound. He had not gone into Radisovo having met outside it a convoy of wounded on the march which he had accompanied and after a night of vicissitude had followed my example and struck for Sistova and so on to Bucharest. I leave to the reader to imagine our joy and relief.

* **BUCHARST August 3rd**—Compelled by two reasons sheer physical exhaustion and the necessity for procuring another horse *vice* the animal broken down by prolonged exertions in connection with the Plevna affair, to remain here over to day, I regret to be compelled to speculate as to the course of events on the other side of the Danube instead of being in the position to forward tidings of actual facts.

The battle in front of Plevna has without doubt wrought a *bouleversément* in the Russian position and prospects of a character almost unique in the history of modern warfare. How bright seemed the Russian military future this day week! Gourko stretching out his arm almost within clutching distance of Adrianople, the Czarowitch waiting but the word from Tirnova to cast a girdle of stalwart soldiers and

solid earthworks around Rustchuk. Schahofskoy and Krüdener, in the full expectation of wiping out the slur of Schilder's failure at Plevna; Zimmerman swaggering at his will about Eastern Bulgaria, threatening Silistria, sending a reconnaissance in force toward Varna, and within a few marches of giving the hand to the right flank of the army of the Czarewitch, when that army should have invested Rustchuk. One bad day, or rather six hours' hard but disastrous fighting, and, lo! the scene changes; the sunshine is overcast by black clouds; the advantages of the Russians crumble like burnt-out tinder; the grim question confronts them, whether their position is not so dangerously compromised as to create disquietude for their mere safety. Devise what scheme of action they may, any and every disposition opens up a new danger. Do the broken forces of Schahofskoy and Krüdener remain unstrengthened on the line of the lower Osma, or strengthened but by the other division of the 4th Corps, with intent to cover Sistova, and the all-important single link there between Bulgaria and the Principalities—the bridge between Simnitsa and the Turkish town opposite? Beaten, disorganized, and weakened, there can be no certainty that this force is able to withstand the Turks advancing in force against it, and the result of another battle that should go against the Russians would be the clearance for the Turks of the road to Sistova, and the absolute severance of the whole Russian force in Bulgaria from its base in Roumania. Do the Turks in Plevna and Loftcha prefer rather to march against Tirnova, co-operating with Mehemet Ali Pacha's army of Shumla, already known to have strong advance detachments about Osman Bazar? There is not a Russian battalion between Loftcha and Tirnova, and in the latter place there is a mere handful of the fag end of the 8th Corps, now partly in, partly through the Balkans. All the Russian force that stands between Osman Bazar and Tirnova is a weak infantry division, General Ernrot's, the 11th Division of the 11th Corps, with a cavalry brigade of the same corps. Isolated, and with its line of retreat compromised, what stand could this force be expected to make? And with Osman Pacha and Mehemet Ali shaking hands together in Tirnova, or indeed with either of them there alone, what is the plight of the 8th Corps and Gourko's people, jammed in the Balkans or dispersed in reckless raids on the farther side? Cut off from their line of retreat, it would only remain for these forces to draw together into the Balkans and hold out in the hope of succour coming in the shape of fresh troops fighting their way up from the Danube. Men aver that it is possible

for Radetsky and Gourko so to hold out for a month, if so all the luckier for them. The report is here to day that the Turks—I know not what Turks, whether from Loftcha or Osman Bazar—have already retaken Tirnova. It is eminently possible in the abstract that this is true, but I distrust the accuracy of the tidings, yet the very existence of the report is significant as indicating the general recognition of the precarious character of the Russian position.

“Ah but says my Russian friend, with whom I am discussing the situation, ‘you are ignoring the existence of the two complete army corps which constitute the Army of Rustchuk.’ Not so, oh Utopian strategist, not so, but pray indicate to me how you are to utilize them? Are you going to march them from east to west, reinforce with them Krudener and Schahofskoy and sweep on against Plevna with this overwhelming strength? I agree with you that after hard fighting and terrible loss this force is strong enough to sweep the Turks from the Plevna position, and so relieve the pressure from the west on your line of communications granting always that they stay in Plevna waiting for the attack. But if you had undertaken to fence on both sides a line of road of a certain extent and if an accident smashed the palisading for a certain distance on one side of this road of yours, it seems to me that you would scarcely be carrying out your duty satisfactorily if you were to repair that gap with a slice of the palisading from the other side. And that is just what you would be doing were you to remove the Rustchuk army from its present position and march it westward to co operate in an attack on the Plevna positions. The road from Rustchuk up the Danube would be open to a column striking out from the force now under the guns of the fortress, and marching on the bridge at Sistova, nor would anything stand between the Russian line of communications between the Danube and Tirnova, and the Turkish force now echeloned on the line between Rasgrad and Osman Bazar. Nor is this all. If the Rustchuk army be removed from its present position the condition of Zimmerman, even now far from safe becomes eminently precarious. He would be in the heart of a hornets’ nest with no help within hail. It would be open to the Shumla army to fall upon him and smite him, aided by diversions from Silistria and Varna. You suggest that one corps of the Army of Rustchuk be left in its present position and the other withdrawn for operations against Plevna. One might ask whether the reinforcements for Schahofskoy and Krudener of a single corps would insure the object in view, but, granting that it would do so, picture

the risks to which the other corps so forlornly left watching Rustchuk would be liable, and the contingencies were it unable to hold its ground.

The fact is that to have any assurance of safety in Bulgaria now, the Russians require there two more army corps. They are in the position of a man who is urgently pressed for five pounds, and has only about three pounds ten in his pocket, without the chance of opportune borrowing. They are borrowing, it is true. They have brought the Roumanian division under Manu up into the line of the Lom; and I hear they are pressing for the other Roumanian division now in fighting trim either to create a diversion at Widdin, or to march on Nicopolis, and cross there into the Bulgarian theatre of war. Of course there is for the present a total cessation of offensive operations on the part of the Russians on this side of the Balkans—we do not know what is happening on the other side; but probably paralysis prevails there also, and I believe that what is regarded as the least evil has been chosen, the withdrawal of troops from the Rustchuk army to operate against Plevna. The truth is, Plevna must be taken, and Osman Pacha's army must be beaten. That is an absolute *sine quâ non* to the continued stay of the Russians on the other side of the Danube. The Grand Duke Nicholas has left Bjela for the Osma, and will himself command in the pending operations, the preparations for which must consume some time.

The Russians are frank enough themselves in confessing to reverses, and I have never known them attempt to throw dust into one's eyes since the Danube was crossed. They may occasionally be silent, but they do not lie. I was surprised, therefore, knowing what I knew from personal knowledge, to hear in Bucharest yesterday on all sides that the Russians had taken Plevna. The story was told with circumstantiality, and Roumanians assured you that the news was official. I knew it must be false, and I learned later who was responsible for it. It was an invention of a high Roumanian official, its object being to stay the panic which had set in all over the Principalities with such intensity. As an instance of the panic-begotten canards, I may mention that the people asked me, as I drove into Giurgevo on the morning of the 1st, how near were the Turks; and when I reached Bucharest, alarmists were proclaiming that the Turks were already in Alexandria. The Roumanian official promulgated within his own jurisdiction the tidings of the taking of Plevna, and he also telegraphed them on to the Foreign Office in Bucharest. The permanent Under Secre-

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tary's impulse was to communicate the news to the Agence Havas and to the Roumanian representatives in other capitals. But it had occurred to him that he had better first make a few inquiries at the Russian Consulate, where Gortschakoff and Jomini are presently in residence. There he was told that he would do well to remain quiet and so the erroneous information has not been officially forwarded outside Roumania but it has appeared in most of the Bucharest papers. It remains to be seen whether this Plevna reverse is to diminish or add to the chances of early peace. I fear the former, because the Turks will be naturally encouraged, and the military honour of the Russians will be at stake. Just before the Plevna discomfiture, I believe that the frame of mind at Bjela was eminently pacific. The truth is that, so far as regards the army, the war has lost its character of a crusade. And if the army is thus affected by the exercise of the commonest faculty of observation, its views must react on Russia, with which epistolary communication, if slow, is unrestricted. Any number of officers, many of high rank, and more than one in the personal suite of his Majesty the Emperor, have spoken to me without reserve on a topic which is of deep interest for us all. They declare themselves to have laboured under the most profound misconception as to the condition of the Bulgarian Christians. They had believed them oppressed, impoverished, impeded in the exercise of their religion, sure not for an hour of their lives, of the honour of their women, of their property. It was in this belief that they thrilled with enthusiasm for a veritable war of liberation. And, they continue, how do we actually find the Bulgarians? They live in the most perfect comfort, the Russian peasant cannot compare with them in comfort, competence, or prosperity. Personally, I may add that I should be glad if the English peasantry were at all near them in these attributes. Their grain crops stretch far and wide. Every village has its teeming herd of cattle, brood mares with foals, goats, and sheep. The houses are palaces compared with the subterranean hovels of the Roumanian and Wallachian peasants. Last year's straw is yet in their stackyards. Milk may be bought in every house. In the villages, for one mosque, there are half a dozen Christian churches. No man experiences anywhere a difficulty in getting silver for a napoleon. And the Bulgarian villager is by no means enthusiastic over his "liberation"—especially as it entails while in progress a fair chance of his having his house burnt and his throat cut by the Turkish irregulars. But while he is spared this fate, and pending the achievement of his liberation, he has as good a

notion of turning an honest penny as if he were a Yankee or a Scot. He "sticks" the Russians unmercifully. So far as circumstances permit, they pay for all Bulgarian property, in the way of forage, &c., which they consume. And don't they have to pay! The Bulgarian realizes that in this matter he is the master of the situation, and lines his pocket accordingly—"puts money in his purse."

CHAPTER XIV.

SECOND PERIOD OF THE CAMPAIGN IN ASIA.

The Turn of the Tide—Defeat of General Tergukasoff at Eshek Khaliass—And of General Heimann at Zevin—Retreat of the Russian Left Wing to Zeidikan and of the Centre towards Kars—Mukhtar Pacha's Advance—Raising of the Siege of Kars—The Kurds and Circassians—Terrible Massacre at Bayazid—Relief of the Bayazid Garrison by General Tergukasoff—Battle at the Aladja Dagh—A Turkish Joan of Arc.

WE may take advantage of the interval of suspense between the second and third Russian attack upon Plevna to survey the course of events in Asia. When we last noticed them the Russians still retained the prestige of their early superiority; but we saw that the balance of military power was gradually being restored, and now we shall find that before the month of June was ended the advantage had been visibly transferred to the Turks. In the middle of June the Russians were investing Kars in the hope that its garrison might be reduced by famine. Erzeroum was threatened by the right wing of the Russian army, under General Tergukasoff, which defeated the Turks near Delibaba on the 16th of June. But from that time the fortunes of the Russians waned. They had begun the campaign with too few men; the insurrection in the Caucasus, which was aided by the Turks, necessitated a diversion of troops which might otherwise have increased their strength in Armenia, and at the same time the military authorities at Constantinople awoke to the danger to be apprehended from a continuance of their old neglect. Mukhtar Pacha received reinforcements, guns, and money, and began a series of movements by which, without fighting great battles, he gradually pushed back the enemy. On the 21st of

June he collected his forces, and defeated Teigukasoff, compelling him to fall back to Zeidikan. The most disastrous check, however, was that sustained by the Russian centre at Zevm, midway between Kars and Erzeroum, on the 25th of June. Here General Melikoff attacked superior forces occupying a very strong position under a Hungarian who bore the name of Faizi Pacha. The battle was long, and the Russian losses so great that Melikoff was compelled to retreat, Mukhtar Pacha was enabled to order a general advance, and even to raise the siege of Kars before the demoralized Russians could offer him any effectual resistance. The following letter is from the Turkish side —

□ ERZEROU, *July 5th* — After the battle of Alschku, some three hours in front of Delibaba, I deemed it expedient to move towards surer lines of communication. My experience of the Soghanli Dagh camp, and the fate of my letters and despatches there, had made me somewhat less trusting than before. Besides, I noticed a somewhat unusual movement of irregular troops, Kurd and Circassian horse. Three battalions too were already moving from Delibaba towards the centre. It struck me that I could combine two objects—the despatch of my news and the check at the centre. The picturesque sight it was brated in the annals of the Teheran courier he thronged with the half- were white headed emirs and wild-eyed troopers with furred bonnets and various arms. There were semi savage Kurds with preternaturally large eyes and cucumber noses, brandishing the longest lances, and having things a good deal more

chosen other company, took our place in the picturesque column. There were a couple of hundred of Kurd lancers, the Circassians numbered some twelve hundred. As we rode down into the Tarkbodja Valley towards the banks of the Araxes, horseman after horseman rode up beside me. They had a confused notion about an "English Pacha" who was with the army. Notwithstanding my silk turban, Asiatic scimitar, and sunburnt face, I was immediately singled out, and my opinion was asked as to whether it was likely a

considerable English force would shortly arrive on the scene of action here. I replied in as oracular a fashion as possible, and rode hurriedly up to the great silk standard round which were grouped people more or less responsible for the individuals in the column. Evening was closing in as our long trailing column neared the marshy banks of the Araxes. The engineers had planted stakes from bank to bank to indicate the ford. After floundering half an hour in the sedgy borders we crossed—almost swimming our horses—and then scrambling again over the marshes beyond, got into Khorassan. I had already made myself comfortable in my oda—that is to say, the corner of the stable I shared with the horses and buffaloes. The imaum, a hadji, and a cherif had come to visit me. My partial knowledge of Arabic enabled me to talk with the imaum and the pilgrim; with the other, the cherif, I communicated through my interpreter. They all commenced cursing the Circassians. They freely expressed their opinion that these latter were sons of Sheitan. What the Padishah was thinking of when he sent such reprobates into the district they, the imaum, &c., could not imagine. Well, in the midst of all this, a Circassian horseman dashed up to the door, “The Cossacks! the Giaours! to horse!” I must say I gained my horse in a brief space. My costume was too Asiatic to permit me to linger when Cossack lances were nigh. While my horse was being saddled I rushed to the top of the house. That means I walked up an incline of thirty degrees. The inhabitants were all “on the housetop,” as in old time, awaiting the advent of news, and I was there, too, with my field-glass. Every hill around had its group of watchers. All at once came a general scampering after horses, and the good Moslems, some fifty in number, marched in a body out of Khorassan. I lingered, watching the black band creeping slowly down the broken ground three miles away. A field gun came lumbering up; it halted; and then I turned bridle and retired with the entire force. It was close on midnight when a courier rode up from Khorassan to say the Cossacks had left. So we came back, but it was only for half a day. I had slept late in the afternoon, and thought all immediate hurry was over. General Kemball and his staff rode into the village. The General thought he could sleep calmly in his konak. Moussa Pacha, commanding the Circassians, was almost peremptory in his request that we all should leave at once. The enemy was close. As we had fifteen hundred horse, I suppose the enemy must have been proportionately strong. We forded the river and climbed the steep earth-banks beyond, and rode hard along the river

border, halting for the night at the village of Komatsu. The sun had not risen as we mounted horse. We were moving obliquely to the Zevin position, for we were marching on Kupri Keni. At daylight came daylight came marked the breaking out—everything showed that a serious combat had commenced. In the pale morning light the infantry columns were already passing us, and three guns went lumbering by.

□ ERZEROU, *July 12th*—Even at the moment when the Russian advance threatened to be rapid and decisive, when Ardahan had fallen, and the entire of the first Turkish line was broken, I do not think that public uneasiness was at so great a pitch as at this moment. Erzeroum is being prepared to withstand a siege, and extensive works of fortification are being executed at different points intervening between this and the front. The great gaps in the ramparts here, allowed to remain up to this day, are being filled up with feverish energy. The ramparts, only a short time ago armed with a few indifferent field guns and garrison pieces of the most primitive type, now bristle with heavy Krupp artillery. The road from Trebizond is blocked with artillery convoys. Guns, both field and position, throng the way, and seriously embarrass the little commercial traffic which exists. This sudden and spasmodic activity, this hurrying up of guns—sadly needed during the last few weeks fighting, when the artillery element may be said to have been almost entirely absent on the Turkish side—speaks eloquently of secret fears, of hostile movements recognized by the authorities, though carefully screened from the people.

Apart from the scarce seen lines of shelter trench, visible only to the practised eye along the marly plain and sun scorched grass of the hill slope, and here and there a squat redoubt, easily mistaken for one of the tumultuous houses of the country, there is little to tell of the proximity of contending armies. The Armenian peasant sits listlessly among his flocks, or plods on after the sixteen buffaloes drawing his plough. A troop of Kurd or Circassian horse comes filing through his village. He lifts his head and stares at them with the same hopeless discontent as he would at any other hostile troop that came by—as he would stare at the Cossacks for instance, should they make their way among his mud hovels. The licence allowed to the Circassians and Kurds passes all comprehension. One could perhaps understand the policy of a Government desirous of terrorizing a

rebellious population, but among True Believers and submissive Armenians and Greeks—the one desirous only of being allowed to follow their ordinary avocations in peace and tolerable security, the other willing upholders of Ottoman supremacy—it is difficult to understand why an unruly mob of undisciplined savages has been unchained. If the Sublime Porte were desirous of deliberately alienating the sentiments of its northern Anatolian subjects, it could not have taken more effective measures to effect its end. I allude especially to the Mohammedan population; and when they are forced to use language such as they have not feared to use speaking with me, a Giaour and an enemy to the Prophet, I could scarcely overrate the extent of their irritation. As regards the Christians of the province of Van, every day brings us fresh details of atrocities which rival if they do not surpass the doings in Bulgaria. Violation of female children of a tender age, wholesale pillage of villages, deliberate torture and mutilation of both sexes, are tales which have become hideously familiar to our ears.

The terrorism wrought by the irregulars is such that the authorities counsel every stranger to take with him on the shortest journey a guard of *zaptichs*, lest the Kurds or the Circassians should meet him on the road. By nature the Circassian is a hardy and audacious soldier. Years of strife in the Caucasus have inured him to a life and deeds scarcely compatible with civilized usages. In exile, along the frontier of Greece and the plains of the Danube, he has been the petted protégé of the Ottoman Government, and the habits, excusable perhaps in his own country while fighting an invader, he has begun to consider as his inalienable right to practise. In his capacity as volunteer in the Turkish army, he takes fresh liberties, and the result is sad to contemplate. Still, there is some germ of good underlying all this; and though the Circassian is no match for the more disciplined Cossack, at bottom he is brave enough; and in other hands, and under different management, would be a capital soldier. With the Kurd it is different. A troop of Kurd horsemen, with their barbarous horse trappings, hair-tufted lances, and wild gestures, might easily be mistaken for a detachment of Comanche or Sioux Indians. The sausage nose and crocodile eye, the bloated face seamed with lines of brutal sensuality, bespeak the unmitigated savage, without a single grace of those barbarous virtues which often more than half redeem the child of nature in his wildest extravagances. There is a chivalry which naturally belongs to most savage races; it is totally absent in the hordes which dwell beyond the Araxes,

and the unhappy Armenian Christians of the province of Van can testify by their hacked limbs and powder blown cheeks that to be a fellow subject of the Sultan is no protection from such neighbours when atrocities can be practised with impunity

□ *ERZEROUN, July 19th* — With the exception of the brilliant Russian exploit at Bayazid on Friday, military operations are in a state of entire stagnation. That the Russians have retired to close proximity with their own frontier is indubitable, why they have done so is not equally clear. Mukhtar Pacha steadily and cautiously followed up the retiring foe, keeping at a very respectful distance. Arrived at Veran Kaleh, three hours on this side of Kars, he commenced entrenching strongly, and then advanced half a day's march beyond Kars, where he remains for the present. Along the way entrenched camps are being constructed and very large levies of irregulars are being drilled incessantly. In Erzeroun a very large force of irregular cavalry, principally volunteers from Sivas and the Syrian provinces, are mounted and getting ready to join a similar force already at the front. As I telegraphed some days ago the artillery element has been enormously increased by the advent of field and garrison guns from Trebizond, and, in fine, everything denotes a settled conviction that the real attack has yet to be made. That the Russians are only waiting the arrival of reinforcements to renew the offensive no one here doubts, and the greatest credit must be given to Mukhtar Pacha for the consummate skill he displayed in drawing the enemy on step by step to previously prepared positions and to a battle ground chosen by himself. Not once even did he venture to assume the offensive. He utilized the well known, long proved capacity for defensive warfare of the Turkish Nizams, and the Russians were forced to see that, though they might force line after line with success, with the troops available at the moment, they would ultimately arrive close to Erzeroun with such diminished forces that, as at Adrianople in the campaign of 1829, they would be impotent for further operations, far from their base, and liable to be taken in flank by the every day increasing irregular cavalry. Between Kars and this city there are four distinct lines of defence blocking the way along the wide valley of the Araxes. One day and a half's march from Kars, the Soghranli Daghi mountains form a series of rocky ramparts unassailable in front, but somewhat apt to be turned on the Ottoman flank. Next comes the Zevinjand Meshingerd position, defended with such success

during the recent fighting. A third line, now strongly intrenched, and armed with artillery, exists at Kupri Koi, at the junction of the Kars and Bayazid roads. Then come the huge plains of Hassan Kaleh, six hours' ride in extent, closed by the last bulwark of Erzeroum, the Deve Boyun range of hills, already long since converted into a triple line of shelter trenches and redoubts. The forcing of each of these lines would cost an enemy enormous losses, and no doubt the Russians consider it the surer and less costly plan to await the arrival of the necessary reinforcements to enable them to adopt a series of flank movements, obviating the useless loss of life inevitably consequent on a front attack.

The following letter describes a deed of treachery committed by Kurdish armed bands in the Sultan's service at Bayazid, where General Tergukasoff had left a small garrison on his advance to Delibaba. While he was fighting near the latter place about 20,000 Kurds advanced from Van and took possession of the town, the small Russian force retiring to the citadel. The relief of the beleaguered garrison so heroically effected was accomplished under the personal command of General Tergukasoff :—

□ ERZEROU, *July 24th.*—The intelligence brought by each fresh arrival from Bayazid and the Persian frontier is a confirmation of the worst apprehensions entertained by the Christians here as to the fate of their co-religionists in that quarter. This evening I had an opportunity of meeting a Turkish officer who arrived from Bayazid to-day, and he tells me that the savagery and cool-blooded cruelty of the Kurds passes all bounds. I could give no better illustration of Kurd peculiarities than the story which the Turkish officer narrated to me to-day about the Bayazid affair. The Russians, thinking only of Turkish regulars, had left a slender garrison of some five hundred men in Bayazid and pushed on towards Alaschkir with their main forces, with the intention of trying to force Mukhtar's position beyond Delibaba. While engaged in this operation an enormous horde of Kurds, estimated at 22,000 horsemen, and under the influence, if not actual guidance, of Sheik Jelaedin, swept down from the Ararat chain of mountains, and surrounded the little garrison of Bayazid. The Russians retired within the walls of a mediæval building, half fortress, half palace, which occupies the summit of the hill above the platform on which Bayazid

stands Provisions were scanty, water still more so, and after a couple of days blockade the Russians offered terms. In Bayazid at the time, apart from the twenty-two thousand Kurds, were seven regular Turkish battalions, under the command of Faik Pacha. These had arrived subsequent to the Russian failure to carry the Delibabâ ridge. The Pacha willingly received the overtures of surrender, and half the without arms, marched from their ar troops could take any measures the time no one had any reason to doubt the Kurd horsemen fell on the disarmed and surrendered prisoners, massacring every one without exception. On this the gates of the stronghold were closed, the remaining portion of the garrison refusing to entertain any proposition after the untoward event which had just taken place. In vain the Turkish commander of the regular forces urged on the besieged the expediency of surrendering rather than die of hunger and thirst. The Russian colonel had fallen in the first assault of the Kurds on the town, and his wife, within the beleaguered stronghold, incited the soldiery to resistance, taking her share in the defence like any of the troops. Anything was better, the Russians said, than again trusting themselves to the mercy of a faithless horde of bloodthirsty savages. And so several days went by. Water was falling short but the besieged hit on the plan of mining towards the town and thus establishing an unseen connection with one of the public fountains. For some time this expedient was successful, the adventurous water seekers being almost entirely hidden from view in the depths of the subterranean opening. But in an evil day a stray Kurd observed the top of a Russian's hat protruding in an unaccountable manner from the soil. He observed, and soon guessed the truth. An ambushade was prepared, and day after day the poor thirsty Russians had to lament one of their number, shot through the head at the gallery entrance. Twenty six days' siege since the massacre had gone by. Provisions had long since run exceedingly short, and the besieging enemy had the caged foe the intelligence drive them from their refuge from the clouds, five Russian our thousand cavalry, attacked ggle was short. The twenty-two thousand Kurds fled at once. The regular battalions resisted bravely, but were forced to retreat, leaving over a thousand men and three guns in the assailants' hands. The long suffering detachment in the stronghold above the town

were relieved, and, after passing a night in Bayazid the Russians deliberately retired, taking with them their relieved comrades, their prisoners, captured guns, one of them of heavy calibre, and several families of the town who declared any exile preferable to further association with the mountain savages. Many maimed and cruelly mutilated townspeople were thus escorted from Bayazid; for when the Kurds and other irregulars arrived they vented their wrath on the Christians of the place, accusing them of having willingly welcomed the Russians, and proceeding to every extreme by way of punishment. My informant estimates that over twelve hundred Christians of both sexes suffered death or mutilation at the hands of the Kurds.

For some weeks past the advent of regular battalions has entirely ceased. In their place enormous numbers of irregular cavalry have been pouring in. Horsemen from Bagdad, from Sivas, from Egypt, from Africa, fill the town and suburbs with their motley squadrons. Horses have been largely requisitioned to mount them, and some thousands have already been sent to the front. A very brief period will suffice to show whether this somewhat heterogeneous gathering can be made more useful than their confrères the Circassians and Kurds.

The following letter from the Russian side treats of the causes of the Russian retrograde movement:—

△ *TIFLIS, July 13th.*—It is stated now, beyond doubt, that in the presence of the Caucasian insurrection on the one hand, and the war with the Turks on the other, the Russian forces in Asia Minor are utterly insufficient for operating in the enemy's country with any chances of success for the moment. General Tergukasoff, one of the most distinguished commanders, has been compelled to retreat before the Turks towards Erivan, and is waiting now for reinforcements at Igdyr, on the Russian territory. They are marching to join him. His victories at Delibaba were of no great avail, on account of the immense disproportion of the respective number of troops, which rendered his tactical superiority useless, and deprived him not only of the hope of forcing his way to Erzeroum, but also of maintaining his position at Djadin. Moreover, reliable news having reached him that strong bodies of irregular Kurdish hordes had invested the citadel of Bayazid, the garrison of which consisted only of two battalions, he hastened back with the view to disengage

that place. It would have been easy enough to scatter the savage horsemen and Bashı Bazouks, who, more bent upon plundering than upon fighting, seldom offer serious resistance, but, unexpectedly, sixteen fresh Arabian battalions had joined them, advancing directly by Van to Bayazid, which they occupied, with the exception of its citadel. So they were prepared to receive General Tergukasoff in an excellent position with overwhelming numbers. On the other side twenty-three battalions commanded by Ismail Pacha, pursued him closely on the road from Erzeroum to the above named fortress, and harassed his rear, menacing thus to cut him off and to annihilate his division to the last man. In order to prevent such a catastrophe General Hermann, accompanied by the Commander in Chief, General Boris Melikoff, was detached from before Kars and, encountering Fuzı Pacha at Zevin attacked him without hesitation on the ridge of rocks where he had intrenched his army. Unhappily the means at hand were utterly inadequate to the task imposed upon the soldiers and finally, General Hermann, after having experienced severe losses—some say over 3 000 men killed and wounded—was obliged to retire to the point from which he had come.

The consequence of this defeat was to render General Tergukasoff's situation more critical than ever. He had not the slightest chance of overcoming the fourfold stronger forces of his opponents, and had subsequently to avoid all general and decisive actions even at the cost of his reputation as an able commanding officer. He was influenced, moreover, by another cause of no special military character. More than 3 000 Armenian families, to whom he had promised aid and protection in the name of the Emperor, followed his columns with all their domestic animals and movable household goods. Such an encumbrance completely tied his hands. It is true that he might have abandoned these unfortunate fugitives on the plea of hard necessity, but he felt his responsibility so deeply engaged in a moral point of view that he preferred to appear in the eyes of the world as defeated rather than dishonoured. And it was no light matter. Notwithstanding the assurance of the Porte in its diplomatic notes nothing is more certain than the prevalence of murder, theft, violence rape, and all sorts of indescribable outrages, in its Asiatic dominions. It makes little difference, I fancy, whether Armenian or Bulgarian throats are cut by merciless brutes or whether an Armenian or a Bulgarian child or young girl is outraged or carried off into slavery. It is beyond doubt that the same kind of

atrocities which were committed in Thrace last year are now going on, or are even being surpassed, in Armenia, where no control is likely to be exercised, and where no consuls feel called to watch events officially. When the Russians, yielding before innumerable enemies, found themselves under the necessity of rapidly retiring towards their own frontiers, thousands of bewildered Christian families joined them with all they had, imploring protection in the fear that the Turkish troops would not only rob them of everything, but would murder them after subjecting them to terrible tortures. That this fear was justified has been shown by painful experience.

The very day after General Tergukasoff retreated from a place called Suleimania five Christian villages near had been sacked and burned, and every living soul in them killed. Russian soldiers and officers found women and babes ripped up and their throats cut on the highway. From all that has been witnessed it is obvious that Turkish warfare is in no respect better than that of the Sioux Indians. What could the Russian General do in such perplexity? He acted like a man of honour and conscience, and, forming a rearguard with his brigade, conducted the Armenians, their animals, and property, without losing a cart or a horse, and without giving the enemy an opportunity of attacking him, across the Russian frontier. Then he occupied an excellent position near Igdyr, on the road to Erivan, about twenty miles distant from Bayazid, where he is to receive the necessary reinforcements. Some regiments have arrived there already; others are on their way from the north. I saw myself, three days ago, two regiments coming from Vladikawkas pass this city. Splendid, courageous-looking, and good-humoured fellows they were, who certainly are superior in aspect to the best Turkish troops that I have ever seen. Only the Syrians, not the genuine Turks, or any other Mohammedan race, are a match for them, as their officers state. Within a fortnight well-nigh 30,000 men are expected to complete the army here, some of whom are conveyed by steamers to Baku over the Caspian Sea.

The siege of Kars has been partially abandoned, and the Russian troops have retired towards Alexandropol in connection with some military plan, the execution of which, however, will depend on the arrival of fresh troops and the enemy's movements. This is all a mere question of time.

While writing these lines repeated detonations announce to the people a victory which General Tergukasoff obtained on the

10th instant at Bayazid over the Turks. After having received the reinforcements sent to meet him from Erivan, he returned without losing a moment and attacked the besiegers as soon as he could reach them. The bulk of the enemy, mounted Kurds, Arabs, and Bashi-Bazouks, fled in all directions, but the Arabian regiments resisted, and did not retreat until heavy losses had been suffered on both sides. Four field-pieces fell into the hands of the Russians, but only ninety prisoners were made. The main object, however, was the deliverance of the garrison shut up in the citadel during a blockade of sixteen days. They suffered very much from the want of water, and had to depend upon cisterns inside the fortifications. For all that, they had faith in their comrades, and were finally rewarded for their endurance. The details of the engagement are not known yet here. Notwithstanding this brilliant success, the position of the Russians is a precarious one in Armenia. The Turks there are, in fact, at least 25,000 men stronger than their adversaries. Mukhtar Pacha is just now advancing with 30,000 of his best troops on the road from Erzeroum to Kars, with the view to disengage that fortress at any cost. After his victory over General Hermann near Meshingerd he boldly crossed the Soghanli mountains, and occupied three days ago a strong position on their northern slopes. General Louis Melikoff, the Russian Commander in Chief, judging his army too weak to besiege Kars and resist Mukhtar Pacha simultaneously, ordered the heavy guns to be withdrawn, and suspended the bombardment, or rather the siege, of that stronghold. Then he prepared for an action in the field, and is at present encamped at Zium, where he has decided to wait for Mukhtar Pacha's attack, till the expected reinforcements allow him to push forward again.

The general impression of this necessary retreat may not be favourable to the Russian arms and prestige, but ere long all will be set right again, and in the second part of this campaign it may be supposed that the faults committed before will be avoided, and especially the most serious one, the underrating of the enemy's means. The Russian troops continue to be in excellent spirits. Even the want of food and water under the scorching sun does not alter their disposition, and they will stand every hardship to the end with unshaken courage. The inhuman cruelties of the Turks against inoffensive persons, women, children, wounded soldiers, and prisoners, have stirred them. They are so enraged against the villanous Kurds and Bashi-Bazouks that they give no quarter to them now, and ask for none.

The following letter from the correspondent with the Russians describes a battle in which the Turks inflicted a defeat on their enemy, capturing the heights of Kizil Tepe:—

△ CAMP KURUK DERE, *August 26th*.—On the 25th inst. we were suddenly aroused at about three o'clock in the morning by the roar of cannon and volleys of musketry. We supposed at first that only outpost skirmishing was going on between the Cossacks and Circassians, but the noise growing louder and more persistent, it soon was evident that the Turks, contrary to their usual practice, had attacked in the direction of our other camp, situated at the village of Bashkladnyklar, some eight miles off to our left. The previous evening I had expressed my apprehension of a possible sudden aggression on the part of the Turks, because I knew that a considerable number of battalions had been detached, in order to reinforce General Tergukasoff's division. As excellent spies, even without being promised any pecuniary reward and out of pure religious zeal, are not wanting among us, Mukhtar Pacha had, of course, been well informed of this state of things, and acted accordingly. Nothing, indeed, was more natural; and when I made my remarks in that sense, I wondered that what has since happened had not already taken place. The officer to whom I spoke smilingly answered that all necessary measures of precaution had been adopted, and that a Russian army was never likely to be surprised by any enemy. Well, this feeling of security has proved to be ill-founded. My fears were really far from being exaggerated.

The Turkish original position on the Aladja mountain extended from the neighbourhood of the ancient city of Ani, now dismal ruins, on the Arpa Tchai River, in the vicinity of Kars, from which fortress the supplies were drawn. The main force, however, leans its left wing on the mountain spur ending in a high hill called the Yagni, around which the fighting on the 18th had chiefly been carried on. At that time too, I had mentioned another steep hill, the Kizil Tepe (Red Hill), which, in an entirely isolated position, towers above the Kuruk Dere plateaux, almost in the very centre of the military positions; but somewhat to the left of us. On this remarkable eminence our Commander-in-Chief, General Loris Melikoff, established his headquarters on the 17th inst. It was usually occupied by a single battalion and four field-pieces, and was thus considered as almost impregnable. On account of its commanding position over the surrounding flats and undulating grounds it was well worth particular attention,

especially as the camp at Bashkladnyklar which is under the fire of its artillery was only about two miles distant from its northern slope. When in a recent letter I ventured to assert that it was not enough now a days for a commanding general to enjoy the

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and Napoleon

losses in our direct leading warfare a really little dreamt of lazy self sufficient Turks being able to illustrate that truth. This however has happened to the extreme surprise of our generals.

It was a bright moonlight night. The mountains and plains were almost as distinctly visible as in broad daytime. Availing themselves of this circumstance at two or three o'clock in the morning on the 25th instant about 7 000 Turks crept stealthily in a compact noiseless mass through a dark deep ravine without being observed by the careless Lesghian picquets and patrols till they arrived at the very foot of the Kizil Tepe. Here deploying they made a sudden rush savagely yelling their Allah il Allah on the eight Russian companies which were stationed on the summit. These men though surprised defended themselves courageously at the point of the bayonet without yielding an inch. Hundreds of Turks who a few seconds before dashed fiercely on with the rifle in their hands fell to rise no more. At last however as the enemy's fast increasing force threatened to outflank and envelop them altogether the Russians were compelled to retreat to the camp at Bashkladnyklar protecting and dragging away their four cannons. Here the alarm was given and as quickly as possible infantry and dragoons marched to the rescue and stormed the hill with dauntless courage in

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sisted in their gallant attempt they would have all been exterminated. In the meanwhile the principal Russian forces encamped at Kuruk Dero had been roused and battalions squadrons batteries with ammunition carts and red cross waggons behind hastened in long columns into the field. At first a certain consternation prevailed through the camp and moreover a little confusion. Orders had been issued to strike tents pack luggage and load everything on the numerous commissariat waggons. As the boom of the artillery thundered louder and the sharp rattling of the breechloaders went on incessantly I thought it best to entrust my baggage to the

care of Russian honesty. No Russian soldier will, under any circumstances, allow himself to take any object not belonging to him, should he even find it in the open field, unless he is expressly permitted to do so by his superiors. After having satisfied my mind on that point, I had my horses saddled in a twinkling, and rode alone at full speed to the top of a commanding hill, where the staff officers had established an observatory. By the aid of two powerful telescopes they carefully watched the enemy's movements, and sent from time to time written messages down by orderlies to the commanding general. Here I had a comprehensive and splendid view over the whole theatre of the fighting.

Three miles from the spot where I found myself, the Kizil Tepe, or Red Hill, a dwarfy height of about 800 feet above the plain, was encircled, top and bottom, by two girdles of smoke and flames. On its rocky, bastionlike summit stood thickly crowded Turkish soldiers, under the cover of the opposite slope, and fired their rifles, aiming down into a ravine across which the Russian Tiflis regiment struggled heroically, but in vain, to reconquer the lost position. The very steep, rocky slope of the hill on that side rendered this task almost impossible. I could distinctly see how in the Turkish ranks an imaum, with turban and flowing gown, lifting his hands in fanatical ecstacy above the devoted children of the faith, seemed to be inciting them to withstand the arms of the Moscow Giaour, in Allah's and the Prophet's name. On some other parts of the battle-field Mohammedan priests were equally observed in the foremost lines, apparently animating timid recruits by fervent words of faith. One of these priests was shot. The Turks meant evidently yesterday to crush their weakened adversaries by a general attack, and so they employed all imaginable means to secure success. Many battalions, emerging by scores together, and thousands of irregular horsemen descended the mountain, and were brought at once into action. The whole long line—twelve miles—from the neighbourhood of Ani up to the Kaback Tepe, near to the road to Kars, was swarming with Mussulmans. On the summit of that eminence, situated two miles to the right of the Yagni Hill, three new battalions and clusters of cavalry appeared, with the view to outflank the Russian army, and capture their camp at Kuruk Dere. Their general advance, however, was thoroughly checked as soon as the Russian columns of combined arms, the battalions, squadrons, and batteries which left the camp here, had the necessary time to march to the enemy's encounter and to deploy before him. In the Russian order of battle the

extreme left was held by two regiments of dragoons, then followed the remaining brigade of General Dewels division, and next to it in the centre Colonel Komaroff's five valiant battalions which have seen hard work ever since Ardahan fell. Connected with them and directing its front line against the Yagni hills, the division of grenadiers operated with one of its brigades (General Cederholm) while the other remained in reserve. By three regiments of Cavalry and their horse artillery the camp here

It took some hours before those masses were all able to meet the enemys lines, on account of the considerable distance which originally separated the combatants. In the meantime the now exposed camp at Bashkladnyklu was broken up. Thousands of carts and waggons transported the tents and the baggage to Kuruk Dere. The straw and dung were burnt on the spot. Again and again the Russians tried to reconquer the Kizil Tepe by storming, while shells and shrapnels were showered upon its ridge, but again and again they were repelled by the defenders, who stood, shoulder to shoulder, behind its rocky edge. On a sudden, shortly after the last assault, which was supported and followed by the play of two batteries, thick white smoke rose on the summit, and a long flame carried it to the skies. Fragments of carriages, limbs of horses and men were scattered in all directions, or flew up in the air. It was clear that stores of ammunition or a powder cart had exploded, ignited by a Russian shell. Joy and satisfaction lighted up the faces of the officers around me, and one of them made the sign of the cross. A short time afterwards, as regiment after regiment entered successively the line of battle, from the left to the right, in full array, and advanced, deployed in company columns, preceded by the usual double chain of tirailleurs, with field batteries between them, the roar of the fighting extended gradually from our left to the centre. It was however, obvious that before the Yagni Hill the fate of the day was to be decided, because from that part of his position only the enemy might have had a chance of forcing the camp here, as it is quite open and unprotected in that direction. Yet long ere the tirailleurs there had mingled their fire with the boom of their cannon and the cricking of their shells, Colonel Komaroff's brigade in the centre was engaged in sharp infantry fighting. Steadily the Russians gained ground, and drove the Turks over the flats and the undulations till they reached the broad ravine of Sabatan, at the foot of the Vadjia mountain. In this narrow valley, studded at its opposite side with intractable

ments and batteries, the battle came to a standstill. Had it not been for an expressly given order to abstain from advancing beyond, it is highly probable that Mukhtar Pacha's camp might have fallen into Colonel Komaroff's hands. All energy of resistance on the part of the Turks had decidedly been broken; they ceased fighting, and retired in disorder. Their dead lay in rows in the valley, and the survivors were glad to get out of the rifle range. In consequence of this mutual pause on different grounds, the fighting died out there at half-past one o'clock in the afternoon. Unhappily the gallant brigadier himself was twice wounded, once in his left hand, and shortly afterwards in his left side. Nevertheless, he continued to exercise his command. Prince Tchadjewadtze, the general in command of the whole cavalry, renowned as one of the ablest and most energetic leaders in the Russian army, was also wounded. A fragment of a shell struck him on the head, but not dangerously, as he is already improving and sure to recover.

While thus the struggle was going on in the centre, the grenadiers, under General Heimann's special superintendence, and led by General Cederholm, fell in with the enemy. After a brisk cannonade with smart shell and shrapnel practice the deadly rifle firing was going on in an uninterrupted line stretching two miles on either side, front against front. Like a light morning mist the smoke was wafted over the hostile forces, and prevented them from taking good aim. The Turks had evidently brought forth their picked men, several Arabian battalions, which fought with resolute stubbornness, as they are accustomed to do on all occasions, thus constituting beyond doubt the Sultan's best troops. Notwithstanding their superior numbers, and the bravery they displayed, they could not hold their ground for more than a single hour, and then were compelled to fall back to their rifle pits and intrenchments at the foot of the Yagni hills. Worn out by the want of food and water, having had all day a sun burning like a red-hot iron over their heads, both antagonists were at last satisfied to see themselves finally separated from each other by intervening hillocks. While the infantry rested, completely exhausted by the heat and the work, the cannons still thundered continuously over the whole line, but with considerably less intensity than in the morning. Finally the Turks, as I have already mentioned, moved with three fresh battalions, and over a thousand horse, down the Kaback hill on our extreme right, endeavouring to outflank the Russians there. The wild, irregular riders, in their fantastical garments, galloped down until they came

unexpectedly in sight of the three Caucasian Cossack regiments. Quietly they stood in the valley, drawn in separate lines, with two batteries of horse artillery in the interstices. The Bashî Bazouks, one after the other, as they rode on, stopped their horses, fired not even reply, and turned to their expectant comrad for plundering the Russian camp at Kuruk Dere had not come yet. They apparently judged that the Russian cavalry was more than a match for them, and in this conviction they united again in squadrons, and thought it prudent to wait under the cover of a concealed battery, for their enemies' onset. The Russian regiments, however, warned by some shells from above that they were likely to fall into an ambush of artillery and infantry, did not stir. So the fighting ceased at four o'clock P.M. on the whole line in the same succession as it had begun from our left to our right. The result was negative. Although the Russian troops had repulsed with great slaughter and remarkable pluck the general attack of the Turks and had remained for four hours on the battle field from which they had victoriously driven the enemy, they had been for all that, unable to wrest the principal position, the Kızıl Tepe hill, out of Turkish hands. Mukhtar Pacha did not hesitate to avail himself of the advantageous position which he had obtained, and shifted to day his whole camp down to the plain where his soldiers are not exposed to the cold night winds as on the mountain, and find an ample supply of water. Here as the Turks have systematically done during this war, they are intrenching themselves as strongly as possible having one wing protected by the Kızıl Tepe, and the other by the Yagmî Hill. The force which the Turks brought into action consisted according to trustworthy estimates, of thirty battalions of infantry and eight thousand irregular horsemen with sixty cannons. The Russian army was somewhat inferior in number, but I can not mention how much, because I am bound to refrain from giving any particulars on that subject. The losses amount in the Russian army, according to the most reliable information, to two hundred and eighty men killed and six hundred and sixty seven wounded. As the Turks were this time the aggressors it is evident that their losses must have been more considerable. Spies and deserters affirm that they lost not less than three thousand men, and I fully believe that there is no exaggeration in this statement. Their skirmishing lines were much thicker manned than those of their adversaries, and when they retreated over the Sulatan ravine, heaps of

their dead and wounded covered the ground. The Russian army re-entered the camp only at ten o'clock. Here, after the work of the day, I, like everybody else, was not very agreeably surprised on seeing that all the tents had been struck, all the luggage packed on waggons, and that I had not the slightest hope of discovering my property in the dark among thousands of carriages, horses, and men, all encamped in confusion over two square miles of ground. Worn out by fatigue, I went to sleep under the cover of an immense haystack till the dry wind in the morning aroused me with shivering limbs.

The Grand Duke Michael has arrived in camp to-day, and it is probable that he will remain there until the campaign leads to a decisive result. What strikes me here is the slowness of all our military movements. This certainly does not promise well, although no serious defeat is to be apprehended with such excellent troops.

The war for Islam had produced a Turkish or rather Arabian Joan of Arc, who it appears contributed materially to the Ottoman success of August 25th.

△ CAMP KARAJAL, *August 31st.*—The partial success obtained on the 25th inst. by the Turks, inasmuch as they have been able to maintain their position on the Kizil Tepe, which they had conquered by a surprise due to the initiative and dashing valour of a young Arabian woman, Fatima, acting as chieftain of some Bedouin squadrons, has compelled, or rather induced, the Russians to change their camp likewise. The position at Kuruk Dere, on a plateau of a dead level, was by no means so formidably fortified as some correspondents, who never had an opportunity of seeing it, have reported. On the contrary, the undeniable fact is, that neither a lunette, nor a rifle pit, nor an intrenchment of any kind had ever been formed there. The Russians, either out of military pride or with the view to allure the Turks to risk a pitched battle in the open field, have always scorned to move pickaxe or shovel for the protection of their armies. With regard to their security, they used to rely entirely on their trustworthy sharp-sighted Cossacks, who with ever-watchful care are on the look-out for the enemy, and carry on an incessant patrolling along the whole line of picquets. Besides, irregular Caucasian horsemen carefully patrol the ground between the two armies, where skirmishing engagements very often follow an accidental encounter, and sometimes give rise to serious

alarm. On that day however an unlucky star shone over the Russian destiny. The Cossacks despite their bravery and watchfulness were outwitted by the clever young *Patma*.

A certain Moussa Pacha formerly a general in the Russian service who had deserted it accompanied her. Acting in conformity with her plan he rode with her in front of the Turkish cavalry when the assault on the Kizil Tepe had been decided on. They soon fell in with a patrol of Cossacks who duly stopped them asking for the password. The renegade who had formerly received his military education with the Russians and was thus perfectly acquainted with their field service explained himself not only fluently in their language but gave also the password which had evidently been betrayed to him by some bribed Mohammedan deserter. So the Cossacks deceived in the dark had no suspicion and supposing the force before them to belong to their own irregulars permitted it to advance. Then of course when the enemy had surrounded them they were disarmed made prisoners and killed.

The following is a report of the battle of August 25th from the correspondent with Mukhtar Pacha —

□ HEADQUARTERS OF MUKHTAR PACHA NEAR KIZIL TEPE HILL *September 6th* — Since the unquestionable Turkish success of the 25th August both armies have maintained an attitude of the strictest mutual surveillance limiting themselves to the change of encampment rendered possible on one side and necessary on the other by the capture of Kizil Tepe Hill the Turkish objective point in the late battle. The Turkish position at the moment of Mukhtar Pacha's night attack on the Russian advanced lines on the 27th ult. occupied a series of steeply sloping terraces descending from the summit of Aladja 8800 feet high and constituting the southern slopes of the Kars valley here opening out into the Russian plains. North in the valley mouth and eastward over the frontier plains are a series of low hills rising abruptly from the rolling surface and evidently from their conformation and mineral structure craters of ancient volcanoes. The hill nearest to our position Kizil Tepe (the red summit) was for a long time a salient Russian point occupied by the hostile army at the moment the Turkish forces commenced their march from Kars after the raising of the siege. This hill has abruptly sloping sides terminating in four irregular

conical summits, amid which is a crater. It was so near to our lines that a new-comer could scarcely realize the fact that main hostile positions could possibly exist in such near propinquity. To its north, at a distance of some 5,000 yards, is the larger hill of Kuruk Dere, behind which is the village of Palderivan, up to the late battle the camping ground of the main Russian army, having its advanced detachments at Kizil Tepe. Farther off still is another hill, which, as it has not come within the sphere of late combats, has not been named. Due east of Kizil Tepe, and at about six thousand yards, is the hill of Uteh Tepe (the triple summit). Until after the last engagement this hill was not occupied by either party. The Russians, seeing the Turkish advance into the plain right of Kizil Tepe, and fearing an attempt to cut the Alexandropol road, moved the bulk of their forces, partly to the plain skirting the banks of the Arpa Tchai directly on the road itself, and partly to this last-named hill. As I stood on the knoll occupied by the present Turkish headquarters, on the afternoon of the 27th ult., I could see long dark columns defiling from behind Kuruk Dere, and directing their march towards Uteh Tepe. Arrived due east of our advance, these columns changed direction to the right, and numerous batteries and battalions were visible in line of battle, apparently marching against Kizil Tepe. Arrived within long cannon range, they halted. Everything was ready on our side; but a few minutes' observation showed that this display of military force was only to cover the transport waggons and stores generally to the plain behind Uteh Tepe. The enemy was executing what experience has shown to be an excessively dangerous movement in face of an active enemy—a flank march. I dare say the Russians still clung to the idea which the past justified them in, that the Turks, however formidable in defensive positions, were not to be dreaded in the plain. I must chronicle my own experiences, that in the last battle the Turks, disregarding their traditional policy of a generation, went down into the plain, and not only held their own bravely against the serried attacks of a redoubtable infantry and artillery, but also captured by assault an exceedingly strong position. This departure from the past no doubt inspired the precautions we witnessed when the Russians changed front on the 27th. I don't think the Turks had the least idea of an aggressive movement when they left their old vantage ground on the hills and camped in the plain.

Winter is rapidly approaching in these latitudes and at this elevation. Ere many weeks are over no troops, much less the mongrel assembly of Southern Asiatics grouped under the

standard of the redoubtable Mukhtar Pacha, could resist the keen winds that blow across the even now snow clad range that lies at the foot of Ararat. But in the plain below, sheltered by the accentuated ridges north and south the conditions change. Water is abundant. The cavalry horses and mule trains will be no longer served with water painfully carried in leathern sacs to the steep heights on which we were camped, but can drink in the abundant streams of the plain below. The failure of the Russian attempt to occupy the valley has left immense quantities of uncut corn at the disposition of the army, and the fatigue of transport has been in no small degree diminished. Since the last two battles the Turkish soldiery have gained enormously in spirit, and now I should not be surprised to see them on level ground successfully combating an equal hostile attack. Why the Russians acted as they have done remains to be explained by themselves. The Turks, as the early movements of the campaign show, expected to be overwhelmed by colossal numbers, and Mukhtar Pacha's hurried abandonment of the frontier, his leaving Kars to the doubtful issues of a siege, his subsequent retreat to Zevin all attested the belief in the impossibility of resisting the colossal legions of the North. The Marshal himself told me at an early period of the campaign, that he had in front of him 100 000 infantry, 40,000 cavalry, and perhaps 10 000 irregulars supported by a powerful artillery. At the time his force was little if any, superior to half the number supposed to attack. Later on we learn that the Russians were little if at all superior in numbers except in artillery. Why this was so, unless the Russians counted on what Napoleon I has stigmatized as one of the gravest errors a general can make the actual underrating of the enemy's power, moral and physical, I cannot say. The latter theory would now seem to be admissible. The Russians—accustomed to sweep from their path immense hordes of Asiatics, and encouraged by the remembrance that part of their troops had successfully resisted during two years the united militia of our nations, during the Crimean war the Turkish army of Armenia may say that from all appearances they would not have thus counted in vain were it not for the presence of the commander in chief, Ahmed Mukhtar Pacha.

superiority to
with a retreat gradually gaining ground from the rear as he went, and when the moment had arrived he made head against the foe, with what success history will tell. He has

been the true Fabius Cunctator of the campaign. Had he at once faced the enemy at the frontier, his raw recruits, with but a slight sprinkling of veterans accustomed to defeat in Montenegro and Albania, with the historic fear of Muscovite legions before their eyes, and above all with his scant numbers, defeat was inevitable; defeat meant pursuit, and pursuit disorganization. I am not now giving my own opinion alone, but also those of the chief of the staff, an aged Hungarian officer, well known to fame, whose counsels in no small degree affected the course of operations.

I can't help wondering at the entire absence of Russian prisoners. However indifferent the enemy has shown himself on the aggressive during this year's Armenian campaign, his retreats have been masterpieces of their kind. Not a gun, not a horse, not even a wounded man has been left on the plain. Even the numerous dead were borne away, and it was a rare exception to meet the corpse of a Russian even where the dead lay thickest amid the half-mown corn-fields. This fact argues a perfection of organization, at least in one regard, which makes sensible Moslems reflect on the chapters of the drama yet unacted, and the part to be played by the Russian army of Armenia.

CHAPTER XV.

THE RUSSIAN DEADLOCK.

Survey of the Bulgarian Campaign—The Russian Mistakes—General Levitsky, Assistant Chief of the Staff—The Russian Generals—The Regimental Officers—Apprehensions of a Second Campaign—The Breech-loading Rifle and the New Tactics—Reconnaissance against Loftcha—General Skobelev under Fire—Prospects of the Russians—A Bulgarian Winter—Supply System of the Russian Army—The Hospital Service—The Military Situation in the Middle of August—An unfortunate General—The Reinforcements—The Russian Supply System—A Ride through the Positions—Tirnova, Drenova, Gabrova.

THE month of August was spent by the Grand Duke Nicholas and his staff in preparations for a new attack on Plevna, which, made with superior forces, would, it was hoped, wipe out the memory of previous defeats, and make it possible for the Russians to resume their advance upon Adrianople. Before noticing the march of events north of the Balkans at this period, it may be useful to review the military situation as set forth in the

subjoined letter, published under the heading of 'The Russian Mistakes'—

† HEADQUARTERS, ARMY BEFORE PLEVNA, *August 19th*—With the news of the retreat of General Gourko from Eski Zagra and Jem Zagra the campaign has come to a standstill, with results as unexpected as they are remarkable. If the Turks began the campaign with a series of blunders that were simply inexcusable, the Russians have brought it to a momentary halt, if not to a close, by two or three blunders equally grave, equally inexcusable, and from certain points of view almost equally disastrous. The first of these mistakes was the advance of General Gourko beyond Kezánlik with a force utterly inadequate to maintain itself, with the necessary consequence of defeat and retreat. This movement was made, however by General Gourko on his own responsibility without the orders of the Grand Duke, and his only excuse is that the movement was made before the battle of Plevna, and that at the time he expected to be almost immediately followed by at least an army corps, a mistake which, on the whole, was excusable, for nobody at that date could have supposed a Russian commander in chief or a Russian chief of staff, or a Russian general capable of committing blunder number two. This was the neglect to occupy Plevna and Loftcha immediately upon advancing to Tirnova, blunder the like of which can only be found in the early stages of the American civil war, when armies were commanded by lawyers, doctors, merchants, and politicians.

Perhaps not even an American civilian general would have committed the blunder of advancing from the Danube to Philippopolis railway, with an army of fifty or sixty thousand men on his right flank, without sending something more than two or three hundred Cossacks to protect that flank, or without even sending out a cavalry reconnaissance to find out the exact whereabouts of the army that was known to be there, and to give timely warning of its approach. The imbecility displayed in this by educated military men is of that kind which simply surpasses belief and defies explanation. A glance at the map will serve to show the most unmilitary mind the absolute necessity for the Russians to strongly occupy Plevna when they advanced to Tirnova, and to seize Loftcha before they reached the passes of the Balkans. The road from Plevna to Loftcha runs parallel to that between Sistova and Gabrova the main line of the Russian advance, and Loftcha and Plevna command all the roads from Widdin, Sofia, and Nish, where the Turks were known to have con-

siderable forces, and the possession of those towns by the Russians would have insured the safety of their right flank and their long line of communications. The necessity of seizing these places was so evident to the most casual observer, of even the most unmilitary turn of mind, that probably not one military man in a hundred ever thought of ascertaining whether it had really been done or not. They would as soon have thought of inquiring whether the Russians were in the habit of placing outposts and sentinels, or whether the artillery had wheels. And yet this measure, rudimentary in its simplicity and necessity, was neglected by the Russian military chiefs until it was too late, with, as its result, the battle of Plevna, and the loss of seven or eight thousand of Russia's bravest soldiers as uselessly as if they had been simply led out and shot by their own comrades.

Who is responsible for this disastrous result? Evidently two men: General Krüdener, the chief of the 9th Corps, who commanded the operations on the right flank, who received the order to occupy Plevna as soon as he crossed the river, and General Levitsky, the assistant chief of staff of the Grand Duke, whose business it was to see that the Grand Duke's orders were executed. General Krüdener, occupied with the siege of Nicopolis, not only did not seize Plevna as ordered, but even withdrew the cavalry that had been sent there for that purpose to Nicopolis. As cavalry could hardly be used for the storming of redoubts, his object in doing this can scarcely be conceived. Had he even occupied Plevna immediately after the fall of Nicopolis all might have been well. Had he even sent out the cavalry to ascertain where the Turkish army was, and give warning of its advance, all might still have been well. The neglect to occupy Plevna as long as he positively knew the Turkish army was still far away would have been of slight consequence. But he did not send a single squadron to see whether that army was approaching Plevna or not, and the first detachment of his army marched into Plevna two hours after the Turks arrived there, without having thrown out a scout or an advance guard, just as though they were marching through the district of Moscow. This in the enemy's country, within ten miles of an army of fifty thousand men. But the whole responsibility in a question so important as this cannot be thrown upon General Krüdener. It is evident there must be more than one man to blame. No such important and vital measure as the occupation of Plevna and the protection of the right flank should have been or could have been left to the care of one man already occupied with an important siege.

Evidently there was somebody else who should have looked after this matter, who should have known that the order to occupy Plevna had not been executed, who should have known the reason why, and who should have repaired the neglect at once, or at least have ascertained that there was no possibility of the Turks seizing the important strategic position. That man was General Levitsky. He may be considered the executive officer of the Grand Duke's staff, who looks after details, who sees that orders are executed, who finds the best way of executing them, and who is besides, it is said, the leading spirit in the military councils for the direction of the campaign in general. General Nepoklitschitsky is old, and does not, I am told, take a very active part in affairs, so that it is Levitsky who is the real chief of the staff, and who is mainly responsible for the direction of affairs. It may not be amiss to say a word about General Levitsky here.

He is among the youngest generals of the army, and was appointed to his present high position on account of the talent he displayed in the peace manoeuvres at St. Petersburg. Here, on the level plains about the capital, where every inch of the ground and every road was known to him, where the fighting was done with blank cartridges, and there were neither killed nor wounded, General Levitsky succeeded in handling an army corps very well and usually won considerable advantage over his adversaries. Lighting a real war and handling an army of two hundred thousand men is, however, a different kind of thing from directing those peace manoeuvres, and although the choice of General Levitsky for his present post may have been the one which seemed to invite the greatest chances of success, it cannot be said that it has been justified by the results. Besides the affair at Plevna, for which General Levitsky is in great part responsible, there are tactical faults in the distribution of the army for which he is answerable. The army has been, in fact, disposed of in the most unheard-of manner. Divisions, brigades, and even regiments have been cut up, parcelled out and sent to the four points of the compass and dispersed so far that it is doubtful whether they will ever be able to unite again during the war. The 14th Division, for instance, is an example of this. There is a part of it on the road to Osman Bazar, a part at or near Ilena, a part at Khumi or Khainkin, as it is improperly called by the Russians, a part at Selva, and a part at Tirmora—points that can have no tactical connection with each other, and which are so far apart that it is doubtful if the 14th Division, con-

sidered the best in the army, can ever again. General Dragomiroff, its commander, has been sent to Tirmova with a battalion or two, and Tirmova has virtually been taken from him.

If this parcelling out continues much longer, little tactical unity left, and any required force would be made up of fractions of battalions, regiments, and brigades hurriedly tumbled together, without cohesion or solidarity. The fault has arisen from the staff miscalculating the forces required, and then remedying the mistake in a haphazard way, by seizing troops wherever he could find them—here a battalion here and a regiment there—to strengthen positions. Another mistake has been the neglect of Loftcha, for which General Levitsky cannot alone be held responsible. When news was received of the occupation of Loftcha by the Turks, Loftcha should have been immediately retaken by the Russians; and for two very good strategic reasons. In the first place, with the Turks at Loftcha, it was impossible for the Russians to cross the Balkans as they wished, in possession of Plevna. The possession of Loftcha points effectually checks the Russian advance, as equally with Plevna, was most important to the Turks as well as the Russians.

But this is not all. A glance at the map shows that the road from Plevna to Sophia passes at no great distance from Loftcha, and that consequently, had the Russians taken Loftcha as soon as the Turks occupied it, they have threatened the Turkish line of retreat, their best line of retreat. The possession of Loftcha is almost indispensable for a successful attack on Plevna; it would have enabled the Russians to take the Turkish positions on the south, and to have sent one more division—the 9th, then at Giurgiu—to the attack. In fact, the possession of Loftcha was necessary to the Russians before attacking Plevna, but the Turks occupied it at the same time. The Russians should have taken it before attacking Plevna. Yet a week or ten days elapsed between the occupation of Loftcha by the Turks, and the Russian attack on Plevna. The Russians never thought of profiting by the opportunity.

of allowing Plevna to fall into their hands. The capture of Plevna by the Turks was a surprise—caused by the most gross and culpable carelessness and stupidity, it is true—but it was still a surprise for the Russian staff. The same cannot be said of the capture of Loftcha, and the fact of their not having forestalled the Turks looks as though neither General Nepokoitchitsky nor General Levitsky understood the importance of this strategical point until it was too late.

Then as to the battle of Plevna itself, there was displayed here an amount of carelessness, recklessness, and incapacity on the part of the Russians for which very few people were prepared—a degree of incapacity which, if it were general, and not confined to one or two officers, would simply augur that the Russians would be beaten in this war by such an enemy as the Turks, and badly beaten too. I do not think, for my own part, there is the slightest probability of such a result, but if the battle of Plevna were to be taken as a specimen of Russian military ability, then it must be confessed there would be little hope for a termination of the war favourable to the Russian arms.

Fortunately for the cause of humanity there is reason to believe that General Krudener who is entirely responsible for the manner in which the battle was fought is an exception, and that no more such affairs will occur. The fact is that

the Russian generals

The soldiers knew

Russian generals who

ful losses sustained

show how well the Russian soldier did his part. Those losses may be safely estimated at 8,000 in killed and wounded, out of a force of 24,000 actually engaged in the battle, that is a loss of 33 per cent. The Prussian loss at Gravelotte, the bloodiest battle of the Franco-Prussian war, did not exceed 8 per cent, and if we wish to find a parallel for the Russian losses at Plevna we must look to some of the hardly fought battles of the American Civil War, Shiloh, Antietam, the Wilderness with this difference, that the American troops who fought these battles were veterans while the greater part of the Russians at Plevna had never been under fire before.

In the first place, General Krüdener hesitated and vacillated four or five days before attacking, although everything was ready, and during these four or five days the Turks were receiving reinforcements hour by hour and digging intrenchments. He assembled general councils of war during this time, composed first of all of his generals, and then of all the

colonels and generals, than which a more absurd proceeding could hardly be imagined. He was wavering, undecided, irritable, and excited. When, finally, in a paroxysm of energy, he made up his mind to attack, it was already so late in the night that the different commanders did not receive the order to march until the hour named in the order for starting—that is, at five o'clock in the morning. The troops on the left wing did not get the order to start until six o'clock—that is, an hour after they should have been already on the way—and the whole army, therefore, fearful of arriving too late, had to start without breakfast, with a march of ten miles to make before going into battle.

With all General Krüdener's hesitation and caution, he does not seem to have once properly reconnoitred the Turkish positions. Had he done so he would have made his principal attack from the south, where the Turks had not fortified themselves, and from whence he might easily have turned their intrenchments. This was proved by General Skobelev, in command of the extreme left, who actually penetrated into Plevna, and turned the Turkish position, but with a force too small to be effective. Instead of this, General Krüdener threw his army blindly against the Turkish intrenchments, like a mad bull going at a stone wall, with no other idea of taking it but the employment of pure brute force in the undirected if sublime bravery of the Russian soldier. If battles were to be fought in this way there would be no need of officers; the soldiers might do all, and the generals had better return at once to the cafés of St. Petersburg and Moscow. There was one general in this battle, the commander of the 30th Division, whose fate has been a sad one. He is an old man—one of the richest men in Russia—whose career has been a long and an honourable one, and who has been expelled from the army for—simple cowardice. He, it seems, did not appear on the field of battle at all, and nevertheless fled panic-stricken to Bulgareni, some ten miles in the rear, before halting.

It may not be amiss to say something here of the Russian army as it exists at present. In the first place all the predictions about the certain spread of sickness when once the army was over the Danube have been falsified. The health of the troops is exceptionally good, better perhaps than if they were in their barracks in Russia. This is only natural. The climate of Bulgaria is very healthy, the country considerably higher than the Danube, and rising higher and higher as it approaches the Balkans. There had been no rain of any consequence, until five days ago there was a

steady downpour, which lasted two days, and rendered the roads very muddy, and filled some of the mountain streams to overflowing. The sky has now cleared again, and we shall probably have another long spell of dry weather. The hospital service is well organized, and besides the military hospital and ambulance service there is that of the Russian Red Cross, and others maintained by private societies. The sick and the wounded are therefore well cared for, and the mortality is very slight. The commissariat service seems likewise to be well managed, and I hear no complaints among the soldiers of insufficient or bad food. I have many times had occasion to try the soldiers' fare when I could not easily procure any other, and must say that, for making a good soup, the Russian soldier is unrivalled. Their rations are excellent in quality, and sufficient in quantity, and I have not heard as yet any complaints of their failing, or of the soldiers going even a single day without food.

There are complaints, I believe, about the Russian artillery. It is said the guns have not the range that was expected of them, owing either to inherent defects in the guns themselves, or the bad quality of the powder furnished. But the service of the artillery is excellent, and capable of making all that is to be made out of the guns. The horses of both artillery and cavalry are still in excellent condition, with the exception of some of the Cossack cavalry, which have been overworked. The Russian engineer service, with the famous Todleben at its head, is said to be the best in Europe. If this be true, all I can say is that the engineer service had better do something to justify its reputation. I never in my life saw roads and bridges in the condition in which they are used by the Russian army. Even the Carlists did better than this. The roads and bridges literally take care of themselves, and had the Russians had an ordinary enemy to deal with, they might meet with a disaster from this cause alone. There appears to be absolutely nobody to look after them. The Russian staff

of course is a great mass, so responsible for this state of things. I should say, is by no means the thing that depends upon the staff is done in a careless slipshod manner that is not to be mistaken. If the head of the staff can commit such blunders as I have already pointed out, it is not to be wondered that the rest should not be up to their work. Of the troops of the line it is unnecessary to speak. The Russian soldier is beyond all praise. The officers themselves say, "Ah, if we were half as good as our soldiers, the Russian army would be the best in the world."

As to the officers of the line, the company officers and heads of regiments are undoubtedly excellent, and will compare favourably with officers of the same rank in any army in the world except the Prussian. But the same cannot generally be said of the battalion commanders, who are proverbially careless, neglectful, and indifferent. The reason for this difference is obvious, and is more or less the result of a law decreed some few years ago. By this law company officers are made more dependent on their good conduct for their positions and promotion than they formerly were, and more than is possible with regard to the heads of battalions. The command of a company may be given to a lieutenant, even when the company has its captain, should the latter show himself incapable or negligent; and as the actual command of a company brings an addition to the pay of 500 roubles, the lieutenants are very anxious to show themselves capable of commanding a company, while the captains who have companies are careful by no neglect of duty to give occasion for losing their commands and being simply attached to the regiment.

Once the captain becomes a major, however, and receives the command of a battalion, the case is different. He then has little to fear and little to hope for but his retirement and his pension. Unless he does something very bad, his battalion cannot be taken from him; and unless he has some opportunity to really distinguish himself, or unless he has powerful friends, it is difficult for him to get a regiment. The result is that he generally settles down into an apathetic, indifferent officer, who barely does his duty and no more, with nothing better to look forward to. The commanders of regiments are a better class of men. They are either those officers who distinguished themselves in the lower grades, and were promoted for bravery, a brilliant action, or great and undisputed cleverness, superior education and intelligence; or else officers from the Guard, men of good families with position, education, and fortune, generally a superior class of men. They are not often either very studious or very much given to consuming the midnight oil—at least for purposes of study, but they are brave, clever, active, and intelligent, with honour and reputation at stake, and, taken all in all, a very good class of officers.

When we come to the generals we find ourselves for the most part among a different class of men, especially if we take the older ones. The period of service of the greater part of these dates from before the Crimean war, and although there are many exceptions to this statement, they cannot upon the whole be considered a superior, or even a moderately good set of men.

They are rather below than above the average, and do not compare favourably with the class of younger officers that are growing up under them. The reason for this difference may be attributed in great part to the following circumstances. At the close of the Crimean war the feelings of the Russian people were most intensely excited against the Government, its defeat, and the disgraceful feeling, especially

against the army, may be judged by the following incident—There was a regiment, or the remnant of a regiment, that had lost twice its number in the siege of Sebastopol, that had distinguished itself among the bravest of the brave, and when on its way home, passing through the streets of a large town shattered and broken, reduced to one tenth of its normal number, began to play a victorious march, when the population, rich and poor, young and old, noble and peasant, rose up as one man and began to hurl stones and mud at the poor fellows, who were expecting a very different reception, to insult them with cries of "Cowards," "Runaways," and asking them why they did not play that march when before the enemy.

The popular feeling was so strong against the army that for two or three years the Government bent before it and neglected the army, the service became unpopular, and the best and bravest of the officers who had distinguished themselves in the war, the men of good families and those who were capable of profiting by the experience gained, who had become really splendid officers in the stern ordeal of battle, became disgusted and indignant at the treatment they received, resigned their commissions, and either retired into private life or embraced civil professions. These are the men who should have been the generals of to day. When they retired, their places were filled by men of an inferior class, whose want of means prevented their retiring into private life, or whose want of education prevented their adopting a civil profession, or whose want of sensibility made them indifferent to the contumely heaped upon them. And these are the men who are the generals of to day. Naturally, there are among them a few who remained from a sense of duty and a love of their profession, and one of these is General Nepokoitichsky. There are others among the younger officers who have achieved distinction since the Crimean war, either on the field of battle, as General Skobelev, in the Cabinet, as General Levitsky, or by their writings on tactics and strategy, as General Dragomiroff, but these are few. And even

of these there may be some who, like General Levitsky, will not come through the present war without damage to their laurels.

Such, then, are the generals of the Russian army of to-day. Of the sixty or seventy generals of brigade, division, and corps commanders, there is not yet one who has given any proof of extraordinary talent, who has risen enough above the level of mediocrity to attract attention, who begins to show as a figure, still less to whom all eyes are turned as the Russian Moltke of the future. General Dragomiroff is the most promising of them all, and he will undoubtedly ere long have command of a corps, and should the war continue for another campaign, as now seems probable, will certainly be at the head of an independent army. General Skobelev, who is the most brilliant of the younger men, and who gives more promise for the future than any I have yet seen, is still too young for the command of more than a division, unless he should have some extraordinary chance of distinguishing himself, and the headquarter staff should meet with another reverse which would necessitate their taking the best man they can find without regard to age or rank. General Baron Krüdener has been relieved from the command of the army around Plevna by General Zotoff, the head of the 4th Corps, who is his senior in point of service though not in years. Krüdener still remains, I believe, in command of the 9th Corps. General Zotoff owes his present position to neither protection nor favour. He has won it solely by his sword, and something may therefore, I think, be hoped from him. He appears to be a man of resolution and energy, and it is he who will command the next attack upon Plevna, which we are expecting daily.

It may not be uninteresting here to take a glance at the plan of operations likely to be adopted on both sides. The Turkish plan is evident. It is to surround the territory now occupied by the Russians with a series of fortresses and fortified camps, then act entirely on the defensive, in which way alone they are capable of availing themselves of the splendid fighting qualities of their troops. They can play the waiting game better than the Russians, who will of course attack as soon as they receive reinforcements, and they can hope by an obstinate resistance, disputing every foot of ground and covering every square rood with trenches, to prolong the war into another campaign, if not to surround the Russians with a circle of iron which they may vainly endeavour to break. This defensive war of positions is undoubtedly the best they could have adopted. The want of military knowledge among

the Turks, the utter lack of good officers, of discipline, of military skill, and the consequent impossibility of handling troops in the field, of executing manœuvres, or even tactical evolutions, makes it impossible for the Turks, even with triple numbers, to contend with the Russians in the open field. But, put a Turk in a ditch, give him a gun, a sackful of cartridges, a loaf of bread, and a jug of water, he will remain there a week or a month under the most dreadful artillery fire that can be directed against him, without flinching. He can only be dislodged by the bayonet, and with the rapidity of fire of modern arms it is very difficult to reach him with the bayonet, as the Russians found to their cost at Plevna. And it is only in this way that the splendid individual courage of the Turk can be utilized—that is, by acting on the defensive, and fighting in trenches.

This is the plan the Turks have evidently adopted, and had they not allowed the Russians to seize two passes of the Balkans they might have rendered it so far successful as to inflict such fearful losses on the Russians in passing this barrier as to put the possibility of seriously threatening Constantinople out of the question. They have on one side Rustchuk, Shumla, Osman Bazar, and the Shevno Pass, all fortified and defended by troops who, however despicable they may be in the open field, are most formidable adversaries buried in trenches and rifle pits. On the other side they have splendidly retrieved their mistakes made in not defending the passage of the Danube and Balkans by seizing Plevna and Loftcha, a masterstroke of strategy, favoured by luck and Russian stupidity, and lacked up by the magnificent conduct of the Turkish troops. It checked the Russian advance as effectually as if they had recaptured the passes of the Balkans themselves with an army of a hundred thousand men. They are fortifying these places, thus completing the circle, which is only broken at Shipka and Khaini or Khankin.

Nevertheless this plan, the best that could possibly have been adopted by the Turks, will not avert it. In

purely on the

ever be victorious in the end. It is destined to be many beaten by laws as inevitable and inexorable as that of gravitation. It is merely a question of time, numbers, and mathematics, as a glance at the present situation will show. Supposing the Turks to have three hundred thousand men here, as is claimed for them—one hundred thousand on the side of Plevna, one hundred thousand at Rustchuk, Shumla, and Osman Bazar, and one hundred thousand in the valley of

the Tundja, to prevent the Russian advance. This estimate is a very liberal one for the Turks, but we can allow it for the sake of illustration. The Russians have already, in the two armies of the Grand Duke Nicholas and the Czarewitch, six army corps, without counting the two corps under the command of General Zimmerman. These six corps will give an effective force of 150,000 men, after deducting 12,000 for the Russian losses up to the present moment. With the arrival of the Guard, which counts 60,000, and three more divisions which have been mobilized, which will give a force of 40,000, the Russians will have in these two armies a force of 250,000, without counting the army of Zimmerman.

With this force at their disposal, there are two or three plans of campaign that might be adopted. In the first place, they might simply leave 75,000 men on the Plevna side, and as many on the Rustchuk and Shumla side, as mere corps of observation, and cross the Balkans with 100,000 men. If it is admitted, as it is on all hands, that the Turks cannot act with success on the offensive, 150,000 men would be enough, and more than enough, to hold the Turkish forces at Plevna and Shumla in check during the forward march of the 100,000 men towards Constantinople. As there are no positions between the Balkans and Constantinople which cannot be turned, the Turks would have no opportunity of availing themselves of the fighting qualities of their soldiers. It is true they can fortify Adrianople, but that place, situated in the midst of a broad, open plain, is not naturally a strong position, and one not easily made so by art. It would require 50,000 troops to defend it, which would only leave 50,000 for the defence of Constantinople. But in the event of such a plan being adopted by the Turks, the Russians could employ the same system I have supposed them to have employed at Plevna and Shumla; that is, they could leave a corps of observation of 25,000 men before Adrianople and attack Constantinople with 75,000, a force quite sufficient to carry it against 50,000 defenders.

This plan is not likely to be adopted by the Russians, nor is it the best one; but it is one which might be adopted as the result of a campaign conducted purely on the defensive by the Turks. The more probable plan of operations will be as follows. Leaving 100,000 men on the side of Rustchuk and Shumla to hold the Turks there in check, including the force required to hold the Shipka and Khaini Passes, they will fling 100,000 men against Plevna and Loftcha, and crush the Turkish forces there, and endeavour to annihilate and destroy them; then cross the Balkans with the same army;

beat the Turkish forces in the valley of the Tundja, before the remnants of the Plevna army, obliged to go round by Sofia can rejoin it, then follow this beaten army, and not give it a moment of halt till it reaches the capital. An army thus pursued from the Balkans to Constantinople is not likely to make a very formidable defence, and if the pursuit were properly followed up the attacking army would reach Constantinople long before the remnant of the Plevna army could reach it by way of Sophia. This is apparently the plan the Russians have adopted which they are waiting to carry out, and on the rapidity of the execution of which depends the question of another campaign.

But the whole of the reinforcements which the Russians are awaiting cannot arrive before the middle of September. If they wait for the arrival of the Guards to begin putting the plan into execution they will then at the best not have more than six weeks left in which to conclude the campaign, and they may consider themselves fortunate indeed if they have a month. Last year it is true the weather held up till the 1st December, and a campaign might have been prosecuted up to that time without much difficulty, but that was an exceptionally good season and the Russians can hardly hope for so good a one this year. If the roads are not completely impassable by the middle of October, they may consider themselves indeed fortunate. But even supposing the season to hold out until the 1st November it will be impossible for them to take Plevna, Loftcha, Rustchuk, cross the Balkans, beat the army of Suleiman Pasha, besiege and take Adrianople, and then carry the famous Kujuk Chekmejee before Constantinople all during this campaign. Such a task might be accomplished by the Prussians, but never by the Russians with the slowness of movement that has characterized them during this war.

If the Russians wait the arrival of the Guard, therefore, they are doomed to undertake a second campaign, at an expense which, in the present state of Russian finances would be almost equivalent to national bankruptcy. There are indications that they mean to await the arrival of the Guard and if they do it will be a mistake only equalled by that of allowing the Turks to quietly seize Plevna and Loftcha. It is only when confronted with this probability that we begin to understand the full consequences of the Turkish stroke of strategy, and the profound imbecility of the Russian generals in allowing them to execute it. A second campaign! A long, dreary winter passed in the Balkans in the snow and the mud, the army decimated by disease, exposure and perhaps an epidemic, perhaps the plague. The long weary months of waiting.

the expenditure of millions—such is the meaning of a second campaign.

The fact is, the Russians should have avoided the possibility of a second campaign at almost any risk. Permitting the Turks to occupy Plevna was a mistake; the battle of Plevna, fought in the absurd manner in which it was fought, was a mistake; but a greater mistake than either, if they permit it, will be to allow the war to drag on into a second campaign. In order to avoid this, the whole plan of action should have been changed after the battle of Plevna. They have enough troops across the Danube to take Plevna, and they had enough after the battle to do so. They had six army corps, giving an effective, as I have already said, of 150,000 men, after deducting for losses. They should have provisioned the Shipka and Khaini Passes for two months, and placed 20,000 men there to defend and hold them. They should have placed 20,000 more in front of Sistova to defend that place, and 20,000 more in Tirnova; then abandoned the whole of the line occupied by the army of the Czarewitch. This would have left them an effective of 90,000 men, which, by a rapid concentration, they could have flung against the Turkish army at Plevna and have crushed it.

It may be objected that I forget the army of Shumla, which could advance in that case, take the Russian army in the rear while attacking Plevna, and thus put it in a very dangerous position. To this I reply, that the Turks having adopted a purely defensive plan of campaign, to which they have hitherto adhered with the greatest pertinacity, there is little likelihood of their doing this. But if they did move out of their fortified camp at Shumla, this is the very best thing for the Russians, the very worst move the Turks could make. In the first place, the Russians could easily get three days' start of them, and very probably more, a time quite sufficient for the affair at Plevna. They could crush the Turkish army there, and then turn round and beat the Shumla army in its turn. If the Russians can catch this army anywhere west of the Jantra, they can simply annihilate it, providing they have first settled accounts with the Plevna army. The Turks, however strong they may be behind intrenchments, cannot stand against the Russians in the open field. The country between the Jantra and Plevna is an open rolling plain, more or less broken up, it is true, but offering no strong positions for defence, nor any capable of being rapidly fortified. If the Turks venture out here they are sure to be beaten, and this is in fact the very move the Russians have been waiting for and wishing for all along. But while wishing for and hoping for it,

they have not had the courage to offer the Turks a sufficient temptation to induce them to do it. And, in fact, up to the battle of Plevna no good occasion had offered. That battle furnished the occasion, and one which the Russians should not have neglected.

Had the Turkish army come out of Shumla, it, as well as the army of Plevna, would have been crushed in two successive battles, and the war would be virtually at an end. Had it remained inactive, then the Russian army could cross the Balkans, and with the reinforcements which are already arriving, might now have been on the march to Adrianople. The Russian generals, however, after having blundered into the affair of Plevna through negligence, now run to the *other extreme*, and, through an excess of caution, adopt a safe and slow plan of campaign that will prolong the war another year. They intend to crush the Turks by mere brute force and superiority of numbers, instead of by skill and generalship, even at the fearful expense of another campaign. So much for generalship. There is, of course, another view to be taken of the question. Should this plan be adopted by the Russians, a considerable portion of territory now occupied by them would have to be abandoned for a few days, and during this time the Turks might come in and massacre the population, as they invariably do wherever the Russians have passed.

The Emperor is, it is understood, very much against such a plan if it can be avoided, for this very reason. But the number of villages that would have to be abandoned are, after all comparatively few, and the population of these might retreat into Tirnova and Sistova for a few days where they would be quite safe until the battle would be over, and although those villages would undoubtedly be burnt, this would after all cause less misery than the prolongation of the war another year. Everything considered, therefore, the Russians seem to be managing badly, and their generals, with one of the finest armies in the world at their command, are showing neither military science nor skill. They will undoubtedly crush the Turks in the end, but it will be by mere brute force and overpowering numbers, and that too against an enemy unable to take the offensive. They began their advance as though they had no enemy at all and since the battle of Plevna they have been acting with as much caution as though they were fighting the Prussians. What would it be if they were fighting the Prussians or even any ordinary enemy as capable as themselves of taking the offensive?

One most important fact has been made manifest by the battle of Plevna, of which the Russians must take account in the future; that is, the advantage given by modern firearms to raw undisciplined troops fighting in intrenchments on the defensive. In former days, when only two or three rounds could be fired against a bayonet charge, regular soldiers had an immense advantage over raw, undisciplined troops fighting in even the strongest positions. The rapidity of modern firearms, and the steady shower of bullets that even the rawest troops can pour against a bayonet charge or an assault, put them nearly on an equality with veterans, as long as they can fight from behind breastworks. This is a fact which the Russians left altogether out of account when they threw their masses against the Turkish intrenchments. If the Russians attack the intrenchments of Plevna in the way they did before, they are sure to be beaten. With modern firearms, a simple mob, individually brave men, without discipline and without organization, with moderately good marksmen, can hold intrenchments against even superior numbers of the best troops in the world, as long as they are only attacked in front. The thing has been done more than once, even with old-fashioned muzzle-loaders; and the Turks have shown at Plevna how easily it can be done with breech-loaders. And it stands to reason.

The knowledge that he can reload his piece, even after his enemy is within twenty paces, will give the rawest recruit a steadiness that can be obtained in no other way, and he is in a very different moral condition from the man who has discharged his weapon and knows he cannot reload it again before the cold steel will be into him. Then he has other advantages. His enemy arrives, if he arrives at all, with thinned ranks, the men out of breath after a run of half a mile or perhaps a mile, or a climb up a steep ascent. They cannot fire with the least accuracy running, and even if they stop to fire their hearts are beating with the violence of their exertions, and their hands are unsteady. They are in a very different condition from men posted in trenches with steady eyes and hands, and a rest before them upon which to take deliberate aim at an advancing foe. In my opinion, the whole system of attack upon even the simplest trenches will have to be completely changed in the future. Assaults, properly speaking, will have to be abandoned. Where such positions cannot be turned, then the attack must have recourse to the same means as the defence. Earth will have to fight earth. The attack will have to approach keeping as much under cover as the defence. They will have to take

must say I think the result not doubtful. The Russian generals will display at least a minimum of military skill, and they will inflict a crushing defeat upon the Turks.

No sooner had the Russians taken breath after their severe defeat before Plevna than General Skobelev sought permission to do something to restore the spirit of the troops. His chief, however, would hear of nothing more than a reconnaissance which was carried out in the manner described in the following letter —

† HEIGHTS NEAR LOFTCHA *August 6th* — General Skobelev pushed a strong reconnaissance to day against Loftcha. Leaving the Grand Duke's headquarters three days ago he took five battalions of infantry, his own brigade of cavalry, and two batteries of horse artillery, and came out on the Selvi road half way between Selvi and Loftcha. His right wing composed entirely of cavalry, advanced and occupied several villages encircling Loftcha from the Plevna road to the Selvi road. He then advanced his artillery on the Selvi road to the heights a mile distant from Loftcha overlooking the town, opened fire with sixteen pieces of artillery, and pushed forward his infantry.

It was evident from the moment the heights were reached that the reconnaissance could not be turned into an attack. From fifteen to twenty thousand troops could be seen camped in and about the town while the low hills immediately surrounding the town were strongly intrenched. There is a strong redoubt on a low hill overlooking the Plevna road while a high, steep hill on the Selvi side is covered with trenches. There were twelve guns in position and a considerable number in reserve visible.

General Skobelev nevertheless resolved to feel the enemy and the hills soon resounded with the roar of artillery and the noise of shells. The Turks replied at once and for a time there was a lively artillery fire. The Turkish artillery practice was very fair. Several shells fell near the Russian guns but as the ground was very soft—we were planted in a vineyard—they rarely exploded, and when they did explode they only throw up the earth a little, doing no harm. General Skobelev only lost one man by the shell fire.

I observed the same fact on the right flank where the cavalry advanced within point-blank range of the Turkish guns and opened fire with two small pieces of horse artillery. The Turks replied and shells fell continually among the horses.

and men of the battery without doing any harm, owing to their not exploding until too deep in the ground. There was a panic on the Turkish skirmishing line at first, but they soon perceived they had only cavalry to deal with, and were not long in recovering their positions. But they did not attack, nevertheless.

In the meantime General Skobelev had pushed forward his infantry, and my attention was soon directed to his side by a heavy fusillade. From where his guns were placed the road leads down a narrow hollow, whose sides were covered with woods, down to the foot of the steep hill which was occupied by the Turks in intrenchments. The infantry went down partly under cover of the woods, but not unperceived by the Turks, who poured a heavy fire into the woods. The Russians pushed forward, however, and in much less time than I could have thought had reached the foot of the hill. They announced their arrival with a shout, and to my surprise, knowing no attack was intended, I saw them begin to dodge up the hill two or three at a time under cover of the bushes and little hollows with which such hills are usually covered. It began to look like a real attack. The Turkish fire grew heavier and heavier, until it was one continuous roll, far more terrible than the heaviest artillery fire, because a hundred times more destructive.

It was evident from this fire that the Turks were three times as numerous as the Russians. An assault under such circumstances would be madness, and I was beginning to wonder if Skobelev could really be madman enough to attempt it. Suddenly I saw a small party of horsemen dashing down the road within full view of the Turks, and within easy range of their fire, and perceived in a moment Skobelev. He was mounted on a white horse, and wore a white coat, offering a splendid target for sharpshooters. As I afterwards learned, he, like myself, began to perceive that the attack was growing far too serious, in spite of his orders, and was now going forward to stop it. The soldiers were, it seems, determined on an assault, and the officers maintained, when reproached by Skobelev, that they could not restrain them. I saw Skobelev stop apparently to give an order, then saw him dismount, get on another horse, while the white Arabian was led back. He had received a bullet. His escort, which had been composed of six Cossacks, was now reduced to three, the others having been more or less seriously wounded, one mortally.

The fire was still raging along the Turkish intrenchments, and the Russians were still pushing forward. Skobelev, mounting another horse, a sorrel this time, again galloped forward.

He reached the foot of the hill evidently shouting and gesticulating while his trumpeter sounded the retreat, apparently with effect, for the skirmishers began to withdraw. Then I saw him go down, horse and man together, and I said to myself, "He has got it this time." He had had two horses killed under him at Plevna. If it is the horse only, it makes the fourth within ten days. It is impossible for him to go on in this way long without getting killed. He is fairly under the Turkish intrenchments, and within easy range of the Turkish fire, which is growing stronger and stronger. They are evidently getting reinforcements from the other side where they are only threatened with cavalry. The roar is continuous, and rolls up and down the hollow like one continuous crash of thunder, only broken by the heavier booming of the artillery. The bullets must be falling about there like hail. It will be a miracle if Skobelev comes out of it alive.

Here a cloud of dust and smoke gathered for a moment, and was swept away by the wind two or three minutes later. I then saw Skobelev again on another horse, fresh as ever, coming back up the road at a trot. He had not received a scratch. The reconnaissance was now over. The troops retired as they came through the wood under the Turkish fire, which was not here very effective. The whole loss was five killed and twenty wounded on this side—rather heavy for a mere reconnaissance. Had the troops not been stopped in time, they would simply have been annihilated as several battalions and regiments were at Plevna. It is impossible to attack the Turks in fortifications without greatly superior forces, unless the positions can be turned.

Skobelev retired about two miles, camped, and made his report. I do not know what was its nature, but it is very evident no attack can be made on Loftcha until the Russians are ready for an attack on Plevna likewise, and no attempt can be made on Plevna until the arrival of more troops from Russia. The Turks greatly outnumber the Russians all along the right bank, and, according to all military rules, ought to attack. A successful attack upon the Russian forces before Plevna would necessitate the evacuation of Tarnova and either the abandonment of the Shipka and Kezanlik Passes, or the isolation of the forces holding those passes. If the Turks could fight as well on the offensive as on the defensive, they would soon bring As seems likely.

Plevna or I

to day can have no other object but to annoy the Turks. When we returned to camp I found the Kirghiz whom Skobelev

brought with him from Khokand sitting on the ground crying over Skobelev's horse, which he had also brought from Khokand—a splendid animal that did eighty miles the other day without feeling it apparently, while a fine English mare Skobelev had was completely knocked up, and had to be killed. The Kirghiz, although himself slightly wounded, had brought the horse back from under fire, and finding there was no hope of saving him, killed him, skinned him, cut off his hoofs, came into camp, sat down, and had a good cry without paying the slightest attention to his wound. He had been utterly indifferent when other horses were killed; but this one, he said, was his countryman and brother—the only thing he had to remind him of his far-away home. I saw tears rolling down the poor fellow's cheeks in a stream. He got two bullets through his clothes, one of which made a flesh wound in his arm. He likewise had two horses shot under him at Plevna.

This reconnaissance has been the most thorough and best conducted of the war. Had there been such a one pushed against Plevna before the battle the result would undoubtedly have been different.

† BETWEEN SELVI AND LOFTCHA, *August 7th.*—General Skobelev purposely camped yesterday in dangerous positions near Loftcha in order if possible to induce the Turks to attack. The right wing, composed of cavalry, was to the left of the Selvi road, about four miles from Loftcha. What made the position tempting for the Turks to attack was that there were three roads from Loftcha, which rejoin the Selvi road about three miles behind us, making it the most natural thing for the Turks to attempt to cut us off from Selvi by turning either the right or left flank, or both.

This morning it looked as though the Turks were disposed to profit by the opportunity to undertake something against us. First a large number of troops, nearly a division, were reported moving along the road towards Plevna from Loftcha, which at first looked as though the Turks were abandoning Loftcha. A more likely explanation, however, was that this was a body of troops on its way to Plevna from the south, having stopped overnight at Loftcha. The Turks, it seems, are still concentrating at Plevna, and they are right, for there will be fought the decisive battle of the war. An hour later, information was received that a strong demonstration of cavalry and infantry was being made against our right flank, which was obliged to withdraw slowly. Two hours later, Colonel Orloff reported that a

strong force of infantry and cavalry was still driving him back. As this movement, if continued, would result in our being cut off from Selvi, where there is a strong Russian force, it became necessary to withdraw, and about noon the General gave orders to march. About this time we received information that the Turks were advancing upon us by the Selvi road likewise. Although this report proved to be incorrect, Skobelev determined to make a counter demonstration in order to give his baggage plenty of time to withdraw.

He took two cannon, protected by two squadrons of cavalry, and advanced again towards Loftcha, expecting to meet their advanced guard, to which he intended to give a warm reception. We advanced along the road without meeting anybody until we reached the position where the guns were planted yesterday. The Turks had either changed their minds or else the movement was only a stratagem. So the General planted his two guns on the same spot as yesterday, and opened fire a second time, to which the Turks instantly replied. We sent them a dozen shells by way of informing them we cared nothing for their demonstration on our right flank, and then, as the main part of the detachment had got fairly under way, we withdrew.

As we retired we saw a number of troops with a broad red band round their caps, who looked suspiciously like Turks. It was the road by which the Turks would advance in case the right wing were completely driven back, and if the rest of our army had gone on—as was possible—then these were Turks. In that case our two squadrons and two guns were completely cut off from the rest of the detachment. Our little column was tightened up, and everything made ready for a desperate stand until the rest of the detachment, warned by the roar of the cannon, should come back to our relief. The result showed how well the General had taken his dispositions for retreat. These troops proved to be our own, placed there to hold the road until we should get back.

We are camped here in a beautiful spot, awaiting events. The General proposes meantime to employ his cavalry to disperse the gathering Bashibazouks, who are beginning to form in considerable numbers since the Russian defeat at Plevna.

* *BSPFA August 9th*—I am well aware that efforts have been made to depreciate the significance and importance of the Plevna reverse. Military critics of experience and position have been inclined to make light of it, and hold the view that

rôle of the strict defensive. The investment of Rustchuk must wait. The troops designed for that duty are needed elsewhere. The siege cannon are not ready if the troops were available. The River Lom still virtually constitutes the line of the Rustchuk Army, but the headquarters of the 12th Corps have been moved beyond it, from Trestenik to Kadikoi. The headquarters of the Czarewitch, with the 13th Corps about them, have advanced from Obertenik to Kaceljevo, thus confronting Rasgrad, while between Osman Bazar and Tirnova the 11th Division stands with its headquarters in Kosarevac. Zimmerman is where he was, no further south than Trajan's Wall. It is stalemate with him. He is guarding the Dobrudscha against an enemy who does not threaten it. He cannot push forward with his thirty thousand men lest enemies from Varna and Shumla should converge upon him. The Russian army begins to suffer in health owing in some corps to irregular rations, in others to hard marching, in all to heat; but the greatest predisposing cause is the total neglect of all sanitary precautions. They never bury dead horses or oxen, or the entrails of slaughtered cattle. They never dream seemingly of the wisdom of the latrine system. The result is a general tainting of the air, which poisons men predisposed to fall ill by reason of lassitude from over-fatigue or long abstinence from food, although men in stalwart health escape. Strangely enough, the greatest proportion of illness has manifested itself in the personnel of the Imperial suite, whose members are comparatively nursed in the downy lap of ease and fare sumptuously every day. General Ignatieff for three days was dangerously ill from a species of gastric fever, and is still confined to his room. Prince Galatzin has been equally ill from the same disorder, and is still in bed. The Emperor has five high officers known as general-adjutants on personal service about him. Of these but one is now fit for duty; the other four are ill. Nearly everybody is more or less sick, squeamish, and out of sorts. The reason is not far to seek. When I first came to Bjela it was fresh and sweet; now it has more stinks than Cologne, and the slums of Strasburg are a nosegay to it. The air is tainted thick and heavy with filth and rotting offal. Even tobacco smoke and brandy are powerless to avert nausea.

* SISTOVA, *August 10th*.—The official return of the loss at Plevna is 1,000 killed and about 4,500 wounded. The severity of the first estimate is mitigated by the coming in of individual stragglers days after the battle. It must, however, be impossible to distinguish between the killed, wounded,

shouted, and clamoured for arms to assail the Turks where-withal. Now they are left to the tender mercies of the Circassians and Bashi-Bazonks.

Now to speak of this side the Balkans. The paralysis brought about by the Plevna reverse still endures. The Russian attitude for the time is perfectly passive till the reinforcements arrive. Seven fresh divisions, not formed into army corps, are now on the march. Some are still in Russia, others are pressing on through Roumania. One hundred thousand men more are wanted, and are forthcoming, but they will have to be waited for. The first brigade of reinforcements is expected to cross the Danube in a few days. It is hoped that once the tide sets in a brigade will cross daily. The offensive will, no doubt, be recommenced before all the reinforcements are to hand. But a large proportion of them are indispensable for a renewed offensive. Plevna must fall, and Osman Pacha must be struck with a decisive blow. At present he can be only watched with intent to hinder further intrusion.

The Grand Duke Nicholas is in Bulgareni, in rear of the intrenched positions of Schahofskoy and Krüdener, confronting Plevna. Part of Mirsky's division stands between Tirnova and Loftcha to hinder a Turkish advance in the direction of the former important centre. Thus are stopped the gaps through which was threatened the right flank of the Russian communications, and the defensive protection is probably sufficient, but the means are utterly inadequate for a renewed offensive. It is estimated that now from sixty to seventy thousand Turks stand on the Loftcha-Plevna line, and they will take a deal of beating.

On the left flank equally a strictly defensive attitude is enforced by circumstances. There are available for holding the line from the Danube to the Balkans on this flank the two corps constituting the army of the Czarewitch, and the 1st Division of the 11th Corps, left behind by Schahofskoy when he marched on Plevna, in all about 60,000 men, necessarily attenuated over a long front, so as to leave no gap for the Turks to creep through.

The Turks are probably of about the same strength, but theirs is the advantage of choosing where to strike if they care to strike at all. Mehemet Ali Pacha may concentrate at Rustchuk or Rusgrad or Osman Bazar. The Russians must be ready to face him everywhere. They dare not take the offensive and leave tracts of unguarded flank. They are not strong enough to guard a continuous flank and take the offensive as well. There remains for them only the

adding by intrenchments to the strength of their foothold there.

That, although the attitude was not a cheerful one, the stout soldiers of Schahofskoy and Krüdener would have fought a hard fight, had Osman Pacha assailed them on that day, I make no doubt. The Russian soldier, so far as I have seen, may be relied upon to make a good fight of it whenever he is asked. But I cannot convince myself that, shaken by previous reverse, attenuated in strength by the losses incurred therein, and with their original great numerical inferiority, the Russian troops would have been able to hold their ground on the Trestenik-Poradim front against a determined attack made on a broad front by the whole force of Osman Pacha. Had they been broken by that attack, no practical soldier will deny that the recovery of Nicopolis would scarcely have been difficult for the Turkish general, and that there could have been not very much to prevent his grasp closing on the very neck of the Russian communications—the bridge at Sistova—if he had pursued his advantage with energy and promptitude. Between the line formed by Schahofskoy's and Krüdener's men and the bridge-head under the knoll below Sistova, there stood not a single Russian battalion.

Once beaten and broken in the Poradim-Trestenik position, it would have been impossible for the Russian troops to have so pulled themselves together as to make a stand on the line of the Osma against a renewed attack followed up briskly; it would have been exceptional good fortune and a highly creditable exploit could they have so retarded the Turkish advance as to have given time for the Russian army of Rustchuk to move from its positions on the Lom, and fall back on Sistova in time either to interpose between Osman Pacha and the bridge, or so to threaten his flank by their approach as to make him arrest his progress out of consideration for his own safety. Regarding all these things—and they must be regarded, for it is the acme of rash folly to contend that all military rules and cautions may be thrown to the wind, because of a foregone conclusion that the Turks will never take the offensive—I say then that there can be no sort of doubt it was eminently well for the Russians that Osman Pacha contented himself with despatching to Constantinople hyperbolic telegrams respecting his success, instead of following up that success by a swift and determined advance.

But this is no answer to my self-put and self-unanswered question, whether it is well or ill for the Russians that the Turks are still continuing passive in their positions. That these are too strong to be assailed the Russians confess by the maintenance

and missing of such a battle, where the field remained with the enemy, and it is wiser to put the total loss at five thousand five hundred, if the official returns are to be relied on. It may be remembered that my estimate on the evening of the battle was between six and seven thousand. This was lower considerably than that of the Russians themselves, while German eye-witnesses have called it ten to eleven thousand.

The first brigade of the reinforcements is a splendid rifle brigade of four battalions. It is now at Simnitsa, and will cross to-morrow. Its destination is the Plevna front. The resolution has been at last definitely taken to bridge the Danube at Pirgos also.

Between the hidden head and S. Stora is the correspondent of the Agence, a Russian soldier, who fell mouth with sand, and attempted to rob him. He was rescued by four marines, who apprehended the soldier. The correspondent is lying in the hospital at Simnitsa. The soldier was punctually shot here at noon to-day. This is an isolated case of ruffianism which might occur anywhere, day or night. I have journeyed alone and unarmed among the Russian soldiers, and so far from being injured and insulted have always experienced courtesy. I do not attribute this to the fact that I am a full-sized kind of man, but to the innate docility and acquired discipline of the Russian soldier, and a single instance of ruffianism must not be allowed to tell against him.

* *SISTOVA, August 10th* —I keep asking myself the question whether it is well or ill for the Russians that the Turks on their flanks in Bulgaria remain so fixedly in their intrenched positions instead of playing the bold and strong game of the offensive. I confess I find myself unable to answer with any degree of confidence the question which I thus put to myself. That it was well for the Russians that Osman Pacha did not take the offensive immediately after the battle of Plevna I can unhesitatingly affirm. Probably he did not lose heavily in that combat, stubborn and hard-fought as it was, and I can scarcely suppose there was much, in an abstract military sense, to prevent him from moving forward on say the 1st of August —the day on which the Russians, having pulled themselves somewhat together after the first crushing shock of the reverse, had been countermanded by their leaders from the half-effected retreat on the line of the Osma, had recovered some cohesion in the positions they had occupied previous to advancing to the attack, and were engaged in

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comes for going into winter quarters. Rustchuk ought almost certainly to have fallen, and probably Silistria and Widdin also; there would then remain only Shumla as a Turkish foothold on this side of the Balkans. But this is the full measure of the Russian expectations now, and they have to face the terrible difficulty and cost of wintering on this side the Balkans, and of renewing the campaign in the spring. They have to take note of any number of series of contingencies apart from inevitable difficulties and expenses. Pestilence may break out among their dense masses. Political complications may interfere to hamper military dispositions. There are strong indications that the war may become unpopular in Russia. In the army already nostalgia is becoming a power.

Probably few of your readers have so much as attempted to realize how terribly severe must be the strain on the resources of Russia, of her armies wintering on and across the Danube. We know something of a strain of a similar character, although our army in the Crimea was a handful compared with the Russian hosts, and we could land supplies within a few miles of its front. The army will have to be housed—it cannot abide in tents during the inclemency of a Bulgarian winter. Now, in Bulgaria the villages are few and far between; they afford the scantiest accommodation. Wood is so scarce that none is available for hutting purposes; it will not even suffice for furnishing fuel for cooking, let alone for warmth.

The crops in Bulgaria have this year been good, but much of the grain has been left unreaped on the fields, and probably on an average not above half a harvest has been garnered. Including flocks and herds, Bulgaria probably is not equal to the task of furnishing more than a month's subsistence for the Russian armies. Roumania cannot wholly supply the deficiency. The Danube is no longer a high road. The roads through the Carpathians from Transylvania and the Bukovina are impassable in winter. There must be long periods of broken weather, when communications all over the country, from the Russian base up to the army, will be wholly impracticable. If the winter is an open one, as was last winter, the Danube will not be wholly frozen over, so as to admit of traffic on the ice, while the floating ice will necessitate the removal of the bridges. The cost of maintaining for five months 300,000 men at a distance of several hundred miles from their base in Russia might well give infinite concern to the richest country in the world.

* SISTOVA, *August 13th*.—Two days of continual rain have so cut up the roads in Roumania as for the time almost wholly

on their part of a passive attitude pending the arrival of reinforcements. It is not that the ardour for the fray is quenched in them. On the contrary, they would desire nothing better than a pitched battle on each flank, if only a pitched battle could be compassed. They are confident of beating their enemy in the open field. But when that enemy firmly and respectfully declines to come out into the open, the affair assumes another aspect. If the Russians under these circumstances were to take the offensive, they would be fighting against soldiers and earthworks as well, and the task with their present strength is simply too much for them. So they are waiting while every nerve is being strained to hurry up reinforcements. The flower of the Russian army, the Guard Corps, is on the way, and Roumania is experiencing another inundation. I do not for a moment question the ability of a Russian army, even if of considerably inferior strength, to conquer a Turkish army in a battle fought out fairly in the open. Such a trial of strength I apprehend, would be great luck for the Russians. But how unlikely is it to befall them! How impossible, rather, while standing on the defensive along a line long drawn out! The axiom that a chain is no stronger than its weakest link is true also of an army in the position I describe. Convergence is almost impracticable—wholly so, if the attacking force should strike promptly, strongly, and without affording previous indications of its intention.

And then comes the question whether the Turks are acting wisely by standing still as they are doing on what may be called the menacing defensive, instead of trying actively to improve the opportunities which undoubtedly lie open to them. No doubt they would risk much by becoming the assailants. They must know themselves better than we know them, and it may be the outcome of that knowledge that keeps them stationary in their positions with spades as well as swords in their hands. Were they to take the offensive and succeed, great indeed would be their success. We should all say then that the game had been worth the candle. But were they to be defeated, great indeed would be the defeat and its consequences, and the world, following its time-honoured practice, would call them rash fools who had thrown away the splendid chances which Fabian tactics offered.

Well it is certain that so far the Fabian tactics have prospered not a little. There can be little doubt that when the seven divisions now on the way to reinforce the Russian armies arrive the

in a Boyton suit. Nevertheless, the Russian train waggons are on the move; for troops in the front must be fed, be the weather wet or dry. They come crawling over the bridge, and essay the steep hill leading from the river-side, up on to the high ground. The liquid mud at the bottom of the hill reaches to the axles. The waggons stick fast; men soaked to the marrow yell and scream, and belabour the horses, which reply by threatening to lie down in the sea of mud. Then the horses from other waggons are brought, and double and treble teams are hitched on. There is a wild scramble, and the waggons are on the level, the horses trembling and panting.

Now look at the waggons and their contents. Some are laden with sacks of bread and biscuits. These are soaked to a pulp, and brown water, thickened and coloured with the coarse flour, is streaming from the bottoms of the uncovered carts. Others carry boxes of tea. Some of these have burst because of the swelling of the tea, which has absorbed the wet; and from all a cold infusion of tea-leaves is dripping fast into the mud below. The sugar-loaves with which others are laden are slowly crumbling; "loaf" is becoming "moist" with a vengeance, and a Frenchman might rejoice in the unlimited supply of *eau sucrée* which the profuse drippings of the waggons afford. But the rain is impartial; it does not content itself with sweetening in this way the knee-deep slush; it is bent also on imparting to it a pleasant admixture of a saline character. Some carts are laden with rough salt in sacks, others with huge lumps of rock salt. The latter are stubborn. They wane, but, not so absorbent as the loaves of sugar, they do not become wholly demoralized, but retain their form. But the salt in the sacks is rapidly disappearing bodily. You may watch the rough canvas gradually collapsing as the thick dirty-white fluid oozes through the pores of it. Before the train reaches its destination I reckon that quite two-thirds of the stores it conveys will have been absolutely destroyed.

Fancy troops out in the open in such weather! Our men had a little taste of mud and rain at Dartmoor, and later in the swamps near Pirbrook, but the rain there was child's play to this. And the Russian tents are not like the stout bell-tents of the British army, while many of the Russian troops—the Cossacks for instance—have no tents at all. You may, indeed, trust in God in such weather; but it is impossible to keep your powder dry, and fighting is a physical impracticability. The reinforcements, nevertheless, under the pressure of extreme necessity, are trying to press

to arrest communications and stop the march of the troops between Alexandria and Simnizza. The country is one huge morass and the road a Slough of Despond. Therefore the reinforcements needed for a renewed attack on Plevna are greatly retarded on the march. One division crossed some days ago. Three regiments of cavalry passed yesterday. A regiment of the 2nd Division is crossing to day, the rest of the division being in the Roumanian mud behind. The Grand Duke Nicholas sent an officer yesterday to Simnizza from the headquarters in Studen to order the reinforcements on reaching the Danube to be pushed forward on Plevna with all possible speed directing that only half a day's halt should be allowed at Simnizza before crossing the river.

The weather has now again become rather more settled, but the rain has injured an immense quantity of stores left unprotected. I have seen a huge heap of bread sodden into mouldy pulp and utterly useless save to feed pigs. Some days must to all appearance elapse before you need expect any important tidings from the Plevna direction. Considerable numbers of Turkish prisoners have been crossing the Danube into Roumania during the last few days chiefly sent down from about Tirnova where there had been an accumulation of them.

The Grand Duke's headquarters remain at Gorny Studen about twenty kilometres from Sistova where he has been joined by the Emperor and the Imperial headquarters from Bjela. Studen is a mere village affording the scantiest accommodation. I understand that for the future it is intended that the Army and the Imperial headquarters shall remain united which seems to imply that the Emperor will encourage his soldiers by actual presence on the battle field.

* *Sistova August 16th* —I am a prisoner. The Turks have not come swarming over the intrenched battalions of Krudener and Schahofskov out there in their bivouacs at Poradin and Trestenik and I am no captive of the bow and spear of Osman Pacha. I am a prisoner not of war but of weather. 'Ye gods, how it rains!' It has been raining hard now with but little intermission for three days and when it rains on the Danube it rains in torrents. Never have I seen such rain except at the commencement of the monsoon in Bengal when the sky seems to open and empty on the earth in one terrific downpour the vast contents of some huge celestial reservoir. It is impossible to travel. Even if horses could act, the traveller would require to sit forth

the livelong day of the disastrous fighting in front of Plevna. One may be sure there is no fighting in the wind when one sees Prince Wittgenstein for ever so short a time away from the army. There is no more eager fighting man in all the host of the Czar than this bearer of a name so well known in military annals. General Stern, the commandant of the Grand Duke's headquarters, has been to Bucharest for a day,—it may safely be reckoned more on business than on pleasure.

The Turkish quarter of Sistova is now a hospital. All the abandoned houses have been cleared out, furnished with beds and hospital appliances, and filled with wounded men as they came in from about Plevna. I have no great faith in the operating skill of the Russian surgeons. I remember that in Servia, when a difficult case occurred, there was always anxiety to have the services of Mr. MacKellar, Mr. Attwood, or Mr. Hume, the professional representatives of the British Society of the Order of St. John. But in care for their wounded the Russians surpass any nation of whose war making I have had any experience. A great proportion, by far indeed the larger proportion, of the service is voluntary, and tendered with an untiring devotion and free-handed liberality which excite the highest admiration and respect. Ladies of rank forswear comfort and the pleasures of society to come with the army and minister to the wounded. There is no *arrière pensée* in their devotion to this duty. They do not write letters to the Russian papers detailing their experiences, exalting themselves by inferential self-praise, and attitudinizing before the world as paragons of self-abnegation. If you want to know of them and their work, you must seek for them and it. They dress with the most studied plainness—I can recall other scenes where the coif of a comely "sister" has been made to assume a wonderfully coquettish aspect, and where a little flirtation was not unacceptable as the interlude to playing at nursing—and they fare very hard, without a thought of self. They tend Turkish and Russian wounded with equal care, and are zealots in their duties day and night.

One cannot say as much for the supply system of the Russian army as for its hospital arrangements. The subject of the Russian supply is extremely complicated; I have been asking about it ever since I joined the army, and I confess I don't nearly understand it yet. There is a duplex organization—a civilian and a quasi-military organization. A Jewish company, consisting of three brothers named Horovitch, are the contractors for the supply of food to the Russian army, including forage for the horses. They convey supplies, as I understand, to certain central depôts which are specified from

onward through Roumania, but their progress is very slow, and their plight is pitiable. One day's good heavy rain would have been of service to the Russian army in Bulgaria. It would have purified the atmosphere, laid the dust, cooled the air, and washed away the mass of impurity which makes so noxious the purloins of a Russian camp. With sunshine on the following day, the men would have dried their clothes, relit their fires, opened up their tents to the sun, and been not a whit the worse. But it is very different under the conditions of this continuous deluge. Everything becomes soddened, the men hardy as they are, sink in physique, and become soddened like their belongings. Diarrhoea sets in and lapses into dysentery. The weak points of men not wholly sound are found out, and sound men become unsound. The spirits suffer, despondency and nostalgia make themselves felt. The hospitals fill up. If infectious disease once breaks out, it spreads with fell rapidity.

I am not theorizing. I speak from well remembered experience of the army of Prince Frederick Charles engaged in the siege of Metz, in the wet autumn of 1870—and be it remembered that his army was housed in the French villages, and had a supply base at Courcelles, whither the railway brought provisions to within sound of the firing of Fort St Julien. It appears that rain is not common in the month of August in Roumania and Bulgaria, so that the exceptionally bad fortune of the Russians with regard to weather still pursues them. But the inhabitants concur in saying that when at this season the weather does break, the rain endures for a fortnight at a stretch and that the weather remains unsettled throughout the month of September. In compensation October is dry and fine, and when there has been rain in the summer the winter is late in coming. Last year, in Servia snow fell in the last week of October, and by the first week in November military operations had become impossible. This rain now may give the Russians a longer term for marching and fighting later in the season.

In the meantime military operations are wholly at a standstill. Of course both sides are doing their best in the way of preparation for future work, but the pause in actual fighting for the present seems universal. With the army headquarters within an easy ride of the Danube, and with quietude reigning everywhere, a good many of the officers of the general staff are running across to Bucharest on a short visit of business or pleasure. I saw yesterday on his way back Prince Cantacuzene, who well earned a brief respite from toil and exposure by the gallantry and industry which he displayed throughout

in a manner so varied and miscellaneous. Messrs. Turquand, Young, and Company would find the "European" liquidation with all its complicated ramifications the merest child's play of calculation to such a herculean task as this.

I understand that Colonel Brackenbury, R.A., who has been acting as the Military Correspondent of the *Times*, does not continue his functions, but is going home, recalled by other duties. In one sense I envy him his experiences, in another I commiserate him. He had the good luck to accompany General Gourko throughout the whole of that wonderful raid of his across the Balkans; he had the bad fortune to be unable to forward with any regularity or reasonable dispatch his narrations of the episodes of that romantic ride. It is not from Colonel Brackenbury, but from the officers whom he accompanied, that I have gathered particulars of his experiences in the Balkans. They are loud in their praise of his cheerful endurance of extraordinary hardships, his British coolness under fire, the sagacity as well as the frankness of his comments, and his hearty camaraderie. They tell me that his horse died soon after leaving Timova; that he made the march on a casual pony; that he had neither baggage nor supplies, neither blanket, tent, nor even macintosh; that he shared the fare of the common soldiers, black bread and apricots, and slept with them on the dew-laden grass. The Russians just now are not fond of us as a nation, but I have never found them backward in according warm appreciation to individual merit, especially when that merit is of a kind that recommends itself to the practical soldier. General Ignatieff said to me the other day that "Colonel Brackenbury had earned the respect and admiration of every officer and soldier in General Gourko's command,"—praise which I regard as a compliment to the British army. It is fortunate that Colonel Brackenbury's narrative, although delayed by circumstances impossible for him to conquer, is not lost, and it cannot fail to be a valuable contribution to our military literature.

* IMPERIAL AND ARMY HEADQUARTERS, GORNY STUDEK, *August 17th*. —The Emperor is pleasantly quartered in a good house on a slope outside the village, with his suite in tents around. The air is pure in contrast with the stench of Bjela. The health of the suite is much improved, but General Ignatieff is still ailing, and Prince Galatzin has been obliged to leave for Karlsbad. The Emperor to-day, with the Grand Duke Nicholas, reviewed the 4th Rifle Brigade as it marched from its encampment here toward Plevna. His Majesty

time to time, whence the supplies are conveyed by the train carts of the respective divisions or brigades. But there is also a concurrent system of supply from the base in Russia, which is of a military character. The waggons are driven by soldiers, their movements are directed by intendants in uniform, and they are accompanied by escorts. Further, intendants go about purchasing supplies for their own divisions in the same territory where the civilian agents of the Company Horovitch are buying supplies to enable that company to fulfil its contract. This must create mischief by producing competition.

But the duplex system produces confusion as well as competition. But for the absence of red tape among the Russian officials, the realization of the fact that, if men are hungry, they must be fed, and that if cattle are wanted and are in a neighbouring field and there is money in the regimental treasury, or, in fact, forthcoming from any source, these cattle are to be purchased—but for this common sense recognition of the truth that, come what will, men are not to be allowed to starve, there would have been an incalculable amount of distress. If Commissary General Stiffneck had “declined to take the responsibility” of issuing stores on the requisition of blunt Colonel Straightforward, who saw that his men were hungry and had indented on the nearest depository of rations, and required the authority of the commissary of the brigade to which Colonel Straightforward happened to belong, and the endorsement of General Stubborn commanding the brigade, and if the commissary of the brigade had returned Colonel Straightforward’s requisition as informal because the quantity of pepper required for his regiment was miscalculated by one thirty-seventh part of an ounce, or because the salt needed was entered in the wrong column, and if General Stubborn had refused his endorsement because the commissary sent a clerk for it instead of coming himself, and if, after all formality had been complied with, Commissary-General Stiffneck had still “declined the responsibility of issue” because he had no definite authorization to dispense the stores in his possession, and insisted on a reference to the chief of the department at headquarters—then I believe that among Russian men and horses there would have been a large mortality. The Russians imitate our own army service supply system in its notorious absence of red tape in emergency, and so the soldiers do not starve. But I should not like to have the work of setting straight and systematizing the supply accounts of the campaign in which provisioning has gone on

it, along with large detachments of revolted Abhasians, and, having landed these troops at Varna, are concentrating them and others about Bazardjik, which certainly portends operations against General Zimmermann. The command of the sea is invaluable to the Turks, who now enjoy the advantage which substantially enabled General Diebitsch to achieve the success of 1828. General Zimmermann will be reinforced.

There was a bombardment from Giurgevo against the Rustchuk position on the 14th and 15th. It came about by reason of the construction by the Turks of new batteries facing Slobosia and Malarus, the intention being to discover the extent of their armament, and if possible destroy them. The Turkish return fire is reported to be silenced, but earth-works are not easily destroyed by a few hours' shell fire. The mills which grind meal for the Rustchuk garrison were burnt by the shell fire.

General Gourko has left Bulgaria altogether, and gone back to the Russian frontier to resume the command of his own division of the Cavalry Guard, now on the march to the seat of war. His Balkan work has materially enhanced his already high reputation as a dashing cavalry leader. General Radetsky, commanding the 8th Corps, is now in chief command at Timova and beyond. The weather is now fine again, and the roads are rapidly changing from mud to dust. I am informed that the recent rains have not materially affected the health of the troops.

Let me give an instance of the manly candour of the Russian military authorities. It cannot be said that my telegram narrating the Battle of Plevna was not perfectly plainspoken. It strove to tell the truth without fear or favour. I may confess to apprehensions that my plain speaking would not altogether be taken in good part, and good-natured friends have freely predicted my expulsion from the scene of operations. I have been sent for by General Nepokoitchitsky, and formally told that telegraphic instructions had been sent from the headquarters to the official newspapers in Russia, to the effect that, pending the preparation of the official report of the Plevna battle, the telegram in question was to be reprinted by them, and accepted as substantially accurate as regards details and results. It is naturally much more pleasant for a Correspondent to chronicle a triumph than the reverse, and I look forward with hope at no distant date to transmit intelligence of a Russian victory.

The following letter presents a summary view of the state of Russian military affairs in the third week in August :—

seemed in excellent health and spirits. The reports as to his illness and despondency are utterly baseless. The rifle brigade he reviewed consisted of four battalions of admirable light infantry armed with Berdans. It will constitute a valuable reinforcement for the Plevna forepost work which threatens, pending serious operations, to become rather warm. The reinforcements are taking a somewhat circuitous route in order to leave the direct thoroughfare open for supplies. The Second division has camped on the downs above Alcair. The Third division is on the march about Simnitz or Sistova.

The stream of reinforcement is flowing now steadily down through Roumania. It is expected that both the Guard Corps and the Grenadier Corps, comprising the picked soldiers of Russia, will be in Bulgaria by the first week in September. The staff here calculate that 180,000 men are now actually on the march to reinforce the army. The next battle about Plevna is meant to be decisive, and hence the delay for the sake of ensuring success so far as numbers are concerned. Meanwhile General Zotoff, chief of the 4th Corps, is in command of the Russian troops holding position in front of Plevna, which is now strongly entrenched and armed with artillery. The Grand Duke in person will take the command when active operations begin.

The 4th Cavalry Division has been detached on an independent expedition, for the purpose of stopping the Turkish communication with Sophia across the Balkans, by blocking the Orkhanieh Pass, the main thoroughfare and the easiest marching route over the Balkans. It is felt here that this should have been done earlier, but if successful it will still have good results, and its value in the event of a crushing Turkish defeat at Plevna does not need to be pointed out. It would go far to make another Sedan. The expedition is obviously hazardous, and its fortunes will be watched with great interest.

The Turks at Plevna seem manifesting some intention of taking the offensive, to judge by their pushing cavalry reconnaissances in more than one direction, presumably as feelers. With one of these there was a smart skirmish on the 15th near Tucenica, a village south-east of Plevna, close to the Russian forepost line.

The Russian military authorities think there is some probability that General Zimmermann will be attacked in his position in the Dobrudscha. They have learned that the Turks have withdrawn numerous forces from Asia, and have evacuated Sukhum-Kaleh, bringing away the troops occupying

probably little loss on either side, but the significance of the business was that the Turks took the initiative.

From the Tundja Valley on the same day a column of Suleiman Pacha's force attempted strenuously to force the Hankoi Pass. It has been reported that success attended this effort, but I am officially assured that this was not so. A Turkish column did indeed force its way into the defile, but was there so roughly handled by the Russian artillery in position, and by a regiment of the 9th Division holding the pass, that it was compelled to retire.

A day or two later a Turkish division made a threatening demonstration from Grivica, a strong Turkish position in front of Plevna. The Turks are by no means resting after this work, now some days past. Up till now they continue to display a modified activity. They struck out from Rustchuk the day before yesterday. On the same day there was fighting, although not serious, before Osman-Bazar. I myself, riding along the Plevna front on the same day, was witness of an artillery skirmish in front of Skobelev's position near Loftcha, where the Turks began the ball, and the Cossacks under Skobelev's command are harassed day and night by forepost work. Now, all this may portend the close approach of the Turkish offensive. On the other hand, it may mean simply the determination of the Turkish generals so to employ the Russians all round the semicircle as to hinder concentration on any particular point. Whatever their intentions, it is certain that Turkish policy disturbs the Russian dispositions.

In a recent telegram I told you that the 2nd Division, having crossed the Danube, was massed here preparatory to marching in the Plevna direction. Suleiman Pacha is threatening to attack the Shipka Pass with forty battalions. The defenders of the Pass consist of but twenty companies under General Stoletoff, consisting of the relics of the Bulgarian Legion and three battalions of the 9th Russian Division. The 2nd Division has therefore been diverted from its intended destination, and is being marched on Selvi to relieve a brigade of the 9th Division, ordered to the Shipka. In a recent visit to the Plevna front I was surprised to find that so few reinforcements as yet had reached the Russian troops holding it. Compared with before the battle there is but the addition of the Roumanians, and the 16th Division; but to-day are crossing the Danube eight thousand reserves to fill up the gaps made by the war in the ranks of the 9th Corps which, when these join in a few days, will restore that corps to its full strength. On the other hand, Schahofskoy has

* RUSSIAN HEADQUARTERS GORNYSTUDEN, *August 22nd, morning*—

A very interesting crisis seems impending in the war, a crisis of extreme technical interest to the student of war and of momentous consequence in a general sense, whatever be its issue. The Russians since the Battle of Plevna have been tied to the defensive, and not always the successful defensive, but as they are invaders it behoves them to resume the offensive, whatever their scheme substantially or

sive, with occasional and ominous strokes of the offensive. Theoretically, at least, their situation is the better one, since they have the choice of alternatives. They may strike if they consider the chances justify their striking, they may adhere to the defensive if the defensive promises better results, but appearances would indicate that they mean to take the offensive, and as the Russians are tied to this course, the question of the next few days is which side will anticipate the other in taking the offensive. A fortnight should suffice to solve the problem.

According to information on which I am entitled to rely, it is certain that the Russians will not be in an advantageous position to resume the offensive for a week, and it is certain that they will indeed that they must, do so as soon as they are ready. What an interesting climax of a most interesting period it would be were both sides simultaneously to abandon the defensive and strike blow for blow! Only this must be considered, that the first offensive action of the Russians must necessarily be concentrated against the Turkish Plevna front, while it is in the power of the Turks to strike at the Russians simultaneously all round the edge of the broad oval now in Russian occupation in Bulgaria. It is a nervous time for the Russians till their strength increases sufficiently to put them comparatively at their ease. Any day the blow may fall and strain their resources to the utmost. The Turks by no means allow them to build on the assurance that there will be no hard fighting till the Grand Duke Nicholas gives the signal for his stout fellows to fall on. On the contrary, their attitude is actively menacing all the way round.

On the 16th there was a general reconnaissance in some force by the Turks all along the Russian left flank. From the Danube to beyond the Balkans, from under the guns of Rustchuk, from Rasgrad from Osman Bazar towards Belbrova, and at half a dozen intermediate places, the soldiers of Mehemet Ali Pacha beat up the Russian positions confronting them. There was not much hard fighting, and

march thither from here. The bulk of the reinforcements are somewhat delayed on the way from the Russian base, but the Guard Cavalry Division is expected to cross the Danube in a fortnight, and a brigade per day to follow in a steady stream.

The water is bad here. The Emperor has been slightly indisposed, but is now quite recovered.

The following two letters describe a visit to a number of the Russian positions:—

* *TIRNOVA, August 22nd.*—I had wasted some days at Sistova waiting to witness the crossing of reinforcements which never came, and at length I determined on a sort of roving cruise round the edge of the ground held by the Russians in Bulgaria, terminable at any moment by the prospect of more interesting work turning up.

In the first instance I went westward along the familiar road to the Plevna front. The position of the army there I have already treated of by telegram, and need not recapitulate. In Karajac Bugariski, which village was the headquarters of General Prince Schahofskoy two days before the battle of Plevna, I found established the headquarters of Baron Krüdener. He himself was not at home, having gone to Nicopolis to witness the crossing of the Roumanian cavalry. The chief of his staff was good enough to give me what information I wanted, and I rode on toward Poradim. The reserves, which are arriving to fill up the blanks in the ranks of the 9th Corps, will be very acceptable. One regiment in it can hardly be said to exist, having lost 2,000 men in the first discreditable mischance at Plevna, and others are very much attenuated by the hard fortune of war. All along the fall of the swell between Karajac and Poradim, the Russians have constructed continuous shelter trenches, with any number of little rifle pits in front of them. This is now nominally their third line of defence; it was their first, when on the day after the battle General Zotoff arrived, countermanded the order for the retreat on the line of the Osma, gathered what troops he could find together, and hardened his heart to stand fast. Since then he has wonderfully improved his position and gained a deal of ground, having his forepost line quite closely embracing the Turkish positions. The utility of this will be found when the next battle comes to be fought.

On the 31st July most of the troops under Schahofskoy's command had to march some ten miles before they reached

marched his brigade of the 32nd Infantry Division back to his original position at Kosarevac, confronting Osman Bazar, and he will meddle no more with the work he found so hard. Thus on the Plevna front, when the 9th Corps gets its complement, the Russians will have two full army corps, the Fourth and Ninth—the former is nearly complete, the latter will be wholly so—at least, nominally—two Roumanian divisions of infantry and the 11th Cavalry Division. Skobeleff's detachment, consisting of a brigade of Circassian Cossacks, with some infantry and artillery, is watching Loftcha. There is to be included also the 9th Cavalry Division, and I roughly estimate the whole Russo Roumanian force confronting Plevna at from sixty five to seventy thousand men. In this estimate I do not include the 4th Cavalry Division, whose line of detached operation is toward the road through the Balkans from Sophia. The Russians before Plevna are unquestionably inferior in numerical strength to Osman Pacha's army.

To my thinking the Russians have over-fortified their semi-circle of environment. Roughly, they have three lines of spidework, and great indulgence in spidework, or rather in the shelter of spidework, is apt to detract from the prompt, vivacious fighting impulse in the open. The works are rough enough, and the redoubts sometimes are faultily placed on slopes leaning toward the enemy's cannon, and so needlessly exposing their interior instead of crowning the ridge, at once a better protected and more wide ranging position. But it must be said that the troops have been very industrious, and there can be no question of their anxious eagerness to be allowed to fight again. Indeed, they do not smother their murmurs at the delay, which I do not think will be so long now as most people imagine.

The Russian authorities are greatly pleased with the appearance and apparent efficiency of the Roumanian artillery. Indeed, the Roumanian troops are everywhere now spoken of with a consideration not previously evinced. Information has reached the Russian headquarters that the Turks were organizing a sweeping massacre of Christians in the Dobrova district, between Osman Bazar and the Balkans, and a cavalry regiment has been sent thither to afford protection.

The Russian corps, brigades, and divisions are curiously split up and intermixed. No importance is apparently attached to the cohesion of any of these integers, and the service does not seem to suffer from this dispersion. The 3rd Division now near here goes forward to Plevna. In my summary of the Plevna force I omitted the 3th Rifle Brigade, now on the

genuine kindly feeling for a soldier in misfortune. "I observe that you are very ill, and that there is no chance of your recovering your health without returning to Russia." "But, your Imperial Highness, I am not ill at all. I never was better in my life!" "Allow me, please, to know better. I can see you are ailing seriously, and I must recommend you to recover your health in the bosom of your family." Such is reported to have been the dialogue.

With the war correspondent the aphorism *omne iquum pro magifico* undergoes a modification into *omne inrisum pro parvo*. He finds human nature too strong for him, and undervalues that of which he himself has not had the good fortune to have been the eye-witness. There were war correspondents with the Russian army who opined that the battle of Plevna was but a "check"—not a reverse. I remember having heard a funny story reported as having been told by a quaint old Scotch divine. Noah, having embarked his cargo, was engaged in navigating his bark when he was accosted in a friendly and affable manner by the Devil, paddling around in a canoe on the surface of the flood. The point of the story lay in the terms of his Satanic Majesty's greeting to the aquatic patriarch. "Moist weather, Mr. Noah!" were the words which the Scotch parson put in the mouth of Lucifer, and they describe the Flood about as accurately as the term "a check" characterizes the defeat of Plevna. But be it what you will, it will not be through the default of correspondents that the next Battle of Plevna is not described in full detail in probably every land boasting a newspaper. Several congregated prematurely, others came later, but still too early, and Poradim is almost as strongly garrisoned by correspondents as by soldiers.

General Zotoff, who has command of the whole Army of Plevna, has his headquarters there. I had not the advantage of making the general's acquaintance, and, therefore, cannot say whether his leading characteristic appears to be wiliness; but there is one indication that such is the case. The field telegraph wire from the great headquarters in Gorny Studen terminates in Karajac Bugarski, and has not been carried on to Poradim, whither from the previous place all telegrams have to be sent by Cossacks. The electric telegraph is a nuisance always, but is, perhaps, the worst of all nuisances when it communicates between an anxious headquarter and an out-lying general. Despatches arrive just as he is dining, messages come even while he is enjoying slumber. Tcherniaieff used to say at Deligrad that if any kind friend would abolish the telegraph wire between Belgrade and him he

division in the singularly hazardous excursion across the River Vid, on which by order they have embarked. In a very short time, as a sententious Russian put it to me, the Roumanian cavalry will be either heroes or mincement.

Poradin was very drowsy when I left it late in the afternoon, to ride eastward through Bulgareni, to the head-quarters at Gorny Studen, there to gather some details concerning a movement of which a hint had reached me. In a previous letter I tried to describe the devious course of the river Osma about Bulgareni. On the main chaussée (conventionally) running east and west, the bridge over the river had gone, and a long détour had been necessary to reach a high peaked stone bridge crossing the river a little to the north-west of Bulgareni. As I rode across this bridge on the morning after the battle, when a surging mass of vehicles was struggling for the precedence of single file, it struck me how disastrous would have been the result had the Turks pursued. The river Osma, although narrow, is a deep trench, seldom fordable, and this bridge, eight feet wide at the most, and with a very lofty and difficult pitch, was the sole means of crossing it in Schahofskoy's rear. Bulgareni is not twenty miles from Sistova, and a couple of pontoons might have been brought in a few hours—there are plenty of surplus ones on the Danube now. But such a precaution at facilitating the means of retreat, should retreat be necessary, did not appear to have occurred to anybody, and the neglect might have produced a catastrophe equal in its degree, as it would have been similar in character, to the concluding scenes of the tragedies of the Beresina and Königgrätz.

With other men, other counsels, is no unfair assumption, and I certainly anticipated that, to ease the passage of supplies, and facilitate the march of reinforcements, to say nothing of wise precaution, there would by this time have been other means of crossing the Osma at Bulgareni than the old high-keyed bridge. But the anticipation was not justified, although three weeks have elapsed since the battle was fought. The approaches have indeed been dug for two additional bridges, and the military carpenters are chopping away at the massive obsolete structures intended as central piers, and gradually taking such form as enables one to judge that the woodwork of bridges is in preparation. On my return journey, travelling towards Gorny Studen, I suffered for the belief I had dared to cherish that it was impossible but that the Russians should have repaired the bridge on the main chaussée on the main line of march from the headquarters of concentration to the headquarters

would give a year of his life. But if a general in command elects to be cut off from direct communication with the chief headquarters, there seems no reason why he should neglect to be thus en rapport with the several headquarters of the divisions under his command. I have said that the telegraph is a nuisance, as I suppose not a few of your readers have reason to know. It is an instrument in warfare worth many rifles and sabres. But here is this Plevna army with its headquarters unconnected by wire with a single subsidiary headquarters. It is wearisome to speak even in terms of comparison—ever odious—of the German army as contrasted with the Russian army, but at least I may urge that the German army is the Russian model, and I cannot resist the impulse to say that I have seen a telegram expedited from the headquarters of a Prussian general ten minutes after they were fixed at the end of a twenty-mile march, the setting up of the field-telegraph having kept pace practically with the march of the troops. Every Russian division has a telegraph train attached to it, whose drums contain a hundred versts of wire, yet the Czarewitch was days at Obertenik on the road to Rustchuk, without telegraph communication with the Imperial headquarters at Bjela, barely fifteen miles in his rear.

In the Plevna Army I found a strong belief existing that there would be no Russian action for a fortnight at least. I have since heard that the term named may probably be shortened, but if I were to venture my own individual opinion it would be to the effect that quite a fortnight will elapse before there is fighting at Plevna, if the initiative is permitted to remain with the Russians. I believe that twelve heavy siege guns are about to be brought up—whether for defence or for offence I know not. I only know that about Plevna I have seen nothing to bombard with as the term is distinguishable from the term to shell. If the Russians are to begin bombarding field works with heavy siege guns, the Turks may show a front before Plevna till you in England are cooking your Christmas puddings, and longer. The road to Plevna is in through the back door, while a continuous rat-tat is being kept up on the front door.

Of the strength of the Plevna force I have this morning sent you an estimate, which is, perhaps, on second thoughts, somewhat overstated. One may speculate in vain as to the thoughts of Uriah the Hittite when he found himself placed in the fore part of the battle, since he has left us no record of his emotions, but I imagine they must not have differed materially from those now felt by the Roumanian cavalry.

plenty reign without alloy. On the threshing-floors in their farmyards, the peasants—if peasant is indeed the proper term for a man who owns land, and cattle, and horses—are winnowing the barley-grain from the straw by the time-honoured plan of driving a team of ponies round and round over the straw. Some use the fore-carriage of an ox-waggon with a mass of weighted branches trailing behind; but the ponies are most common in this actual “treading of” the threshing-floor. It is clear that the sufferings under which the Bulgarians north of the Balkans professed to labour at the hands of the Turks could not have been of a kind affecting their material prosperity, for we find them as the Turks left them, wealthy in agricultural possessions beyond any farmer-peasantry of whom I have any cognisance.

The beautiful and romantic Zavrada Pass, which constitutes a natural approach of surpassing grandeur to Tirnova—that surely most picturesque of all towns—can never lose its charm. The combination of water, rock, and foliage is perfect, and every turn in the winding road affords a fresh joy. But while we felt the beauty of the scene, we felt, too, how different from now were the auspices under which we first traversed that pass. We were with the cortége of the Grand Duke when he rode into Tirnova amid the plaudits and the glad weeping of a population beside themselves with joy. Flowers were showered down from the windows, and strewed his path; priests and girls struggled for the honour of kissing his hand. To be with the Russians in Tirnova then was to be a welcome guest, for every door stood open. The strains of triumphal music swept along the quaint narrow streets, and the precipices, amid which the town hangs rather than is built, sent back a melodious echo.

How strong the contrast now! The road up the steep into the town was blocked by a double row of vehicles, one driven by weary and somewhat irritable Russian soldiers, the other by sullen Bulgarians, who have found out with great alacrity that they have rights since the Russians came, and are not only no longer subservient, but even in a tentative way inclined to be uncivil if they can but harden their nerves. The place was never clean, but it is fouler now than ever. Above the entrance stands, gaunt and ugly, the skeleton of a triumphal arch, to which no more clings the last shred of decoration: it looked like the gallows mourning the abolition of capital punishment. The narrow street was a disheartening chaos of vehicles, whose horses scrambled about over the filthy stones; of miserable fugitives squatting listlessly wherever they could find a corner, or trying to push through with their

of operation I would not cross the old stone bridge, and rode straight into the heart of the deceitful peninsula. There were troops around the villages studding its fertile bosom—it was not possible that they had been marched round by the stone bridge to reach these camping grounds! But when I gained the bank of the Osma, opposite the gap in the hills through which the chaussee route strikes away eastward to Gorny Studen, I found no bridge ready. The men were working at one cumbrous, primitive affair, which will probably be ready in a few days—a commencement had just been made on a second bridge. Such is the progress achieved during three weeks of so called preparation for another attack on Plevna! Too disgusted to go back, I swam my riding horse across the ugly, sullen Osma, but my waggon had ignominiously to return, and effect the crossing at the original stone bridge.

At Gorny Studen this morning, I was told that Suleiman Pacha is threatening the Shipka Pass, and that the 2nd Division, under the command of Prince Imeretinski, had been sent away to release from Selva reinforcements for the scanty body of defenders—only about some twenty companies—with which General Stoletoff was holding the Pass. It would be eminently worth while to be there if the threatened attack should actually be made, and I determined to start at once, but, on the other hand, I was cautioned that I would do well to be back at Gorny Studen by the 27th inst, if I wished to witness still more important operations from their commencement. My only hope then was that if there was to be fighting at the Shipka, it should occur on the only day which I had available for witnessing it—the 24th, since it would be necessary for me to quit the Balkans on my return journey to Gorny Studen on the 25th. It was rather a forlorn hope on which to set out on a four days' ride, but then I have never been beyond Timova, and a man who is interested in this war ought to see the Shipka Pass simply as the gratification of a legitimate curiosity.

My companions and myself, leaving Gorny Studen this morning before the heat of the day acquired its full intensity, struck almost due south by mere cart tracks linking together the pretty villages in the leafy hollows. No prettier country can well be imagined. It undulates fantastically, and presents continual surprises of diversified surface, but everywhere trees are dotted singly or in clumps, which give the scene a park-like aspect. There are no soldiers anywhere, save an occasional post of some half-dozen men encamped in a clump of trees on the outskirts of a village, and peace and

and then came the cool splash of the water over the mill-wheel and the scent of the balsams and the thyme from the miller's garden, fringed by willows whose tresses laved themselves in the stream. We rode through verdant meadows, our horses' hoofs whisking aside the rich lush-grass, by babbling fountains, where from the face of a hoary wall which the Romans might have built, but on which the Turks have carved an inscription, springs a crystal jet of clear water, transparent as glass, cold as ice, grateful alike to the parched throat and the burning temples. We skirted vineyards where the heavy masses of dark green foliage but half screened the pale green clusters of grapes just beginning to soften into ripeness, by orchards over whose walls the plum-branches nodded heavy with yellow and purple globes, by detached farm-steadings, each one the habitation of several families, united to each other by the ties of relationship.

The ride would have been an unadulterated pleasure but for the heat and the miserable fugitives. Let me speak first of the minor detraction from our enjoyment. I may claim to know something of heat. I have been in the Red Sea in July. I have ridden with Sir Richard Temple across the parched *maidans* of Bengal in the month of May, when the thermometer in the dead of night never fell below 106, and when two indigo planters betted among themselves which of the two of us would the earlier succumb to sunstroke. I know how the Nepaul Terai reeks in the hot season, and I know the hot closeness of a Highland glen in August; but for fierce, cruel, blazing, burning, scorching heat, I have never felt anything to compare with the last ten days in Bulgaria. Somehow, ragingly hot as it is, the heat does not enervate one greatly, for it is a dry heat; but it melts one, it burns one, it so blisters the face that the skin of it becomes painful to the touch. As I write, I look across at my companion, and I can compare him, so far as colour goes, to nothing so truly as a boiled lobster; he returns the compliment with the aggravation that the boiled lobster I resemble in tint must have been boiled in a decoction of burnt sienna.

And now let me speak of those unfortunate creatures who, warned by the fate of their neighbours, have hurried across the Balkans to escape the fell retribution of the Turks. It is not for me now to inquire closely whether when Gourko's Cossacks were in their villages and Leuchtenberg's dragoons clanked along their streets, these Bulgarians were themselves full of nothing save the milk of human kindness toward—or should I say against?—their Turkish co-inhabitants, against whom the current of the fortune of war seemed to be setting so

donkeys laden with clothes and children, of Bulgarian civilians foolishly drunk and reeling about over the stones, amid the jeers of the Russian soldiers, of limp Bulgarian lads in uniform, of whom the Russians will persist in trying to make soldiers, a service for which they lack alike heart and stamina, of time worn men of the original Bulgarian Legion, who having come somehow out of the pandemonium of Eski Zagra with uncut throats, have drifted back hither demoralized and disgusted, of German Jew chapmen, selling everything from bad champagne to rubbishy boots, of marketenders seeking shops whereat to replenish their waggons, and of Bulgarian priests walking about in long petticoats

I went to the house to which on my previous visit I had been welcomed with open arms, and now found some difficulty in getting in—I think indeed, that I should have been refused altogether had I not recalled to the memory of the landlady the fact that I paid well for my previous entertainment. As for my horses, the only place I could find for them was a wretched subterranean stable under a loathsome khan—a stable reached by successive tiers of rotten and foul stone steps and when there neither hay nor corn was to be had for them, they had to be fed on bread. It was too late to call on General Radetzky or General Dragomiroff, who I had been told had been both resident in the place. All I could learn was that a mass of troops had marched off the day before in the direction of Gabrova, and that further detachments had gone on later.

* *GABROVA, August 23rd*—I was heartily glad at an early hour of Tirnova we cleared turesquely impracticable town behind, entered on the sublime defile by the side of the Jantra, under the shadow of great impending precipices. Presently we quitted the Jantra no more to see it till we reached the vicinity of Gabrova, and we threaded glen after glen, climbed steep after steep, passed through sweetly-situated village after village, all embowered in foliage, till we reached the Valley of the Drenova, and suddenly found ourselves looking down into the snug-looking town of Drenova. We abandoned for most part of the way the chaussee, with its clouds of dust and long trains of rattling provision wagons and rode by the narrow hill tracks, which at once shortened the way and made it pleasanter. We rode through thick woods, where dense foliage shaded from the blistering sun rays, by wimpling streams on which were gurgling mill races.

be said that most of these came from the villages on this side of the Shipka Pass.

The aspect of Drenova made me long for time to linger over its quaintnesses. It is as picturesque as is Tirnova, but quite in a different style. It owes little of its picturesqueness to its situation. But the houses ! They are almost without exception built with fronts of dark wood, elaborately carved and projecting storey over storey, till the third tier is reached, with outward sloping shutter flaps on the ground floor ; in the storeys above, massively grated windows, cut in the woodwork. What adds so much to the effect of houses so built is that along the face of many are carried trailing vine boughs, laden with rich clusters of fruit, which dangle in front of the windows, and give a charming freshness to the street. The architecture has a curious resemblance to that of many houses in the principal street in the Native town of Bombay, and the resemblance is heightened by the circumstance that several of the houses have their fronts rudely but brilliantly painted in fanciful and allegorical designs, chiefly of figures of a wildly impossible type in the present circumscribed condition of the animal kingdom.

I can do what it has never previously been in my power to do in respect to any place of public entertainment in Bulgaria. I can recommend the khan of Drenova as reasonably clean and fairly comfortable. Only it was full—crammed to the ceiling with fugitive families who could afford to pay for a room, or part of a room, pending events. But it was a great thing to get hay and corn for the horses, and a seat or cushion in a passage while we ate the soup and roast fowl which a pretty Bulgarian cook prepared for us. The road from Drenova to Gabrova, although a fair specimen of engineering skill, must be hard work for horses drawing vehicles. But we could not feel for the horses, for admiring the wonderful surprises of the scenery. The only road I know to compare to it in this respect is the route up into the Black Forest from Hausich, on the great Baden plain, to Freiburg, near the ridge where the waters of the Kinsig, flowing into the Rhine, and of the Danube, spring from two fountains not ten paces apart on the slope above St. Georges. During our journey we had seen but few soldiers. Certainly the Russians had left scanty supports between Tirnova and the “twenty companies” of whom my valued informant in Gorny Studen had spoken as constituting for the time the sole garrison of the Shipka Pass fortifications. But in a deep gulley about six miles from Gabrova, we came on the reserve artillery train of two brigades of the 8th Army Corps. The waggons were being

swiftly and steadily. Let us take them as we find them. The whole road from Turnova to Gabrova, but perhaps more especially between Drenova and Gabrova seemed one great picnic, but it was an inexpressibly mournful picnic. My artist companion revelled in the picturesqueness of the vivid colours of the women's dresses, but he had no heart to sketch the bivouacs in their profound misery. We were the witnesses not of a few handfuls of casual flightings, but of the general exodus of the inhabitants of a whole territory. There were peasants, but there were also families of a better class—families whose women dressed, not in Turkish trousers, in gaudy-patterned petticoats, and bodices of all the hues of the rainbow, but as the Englishwoman of to-day dresses. There were women to whom you felt it not quite the thing to speak without an introduction, and whose habitation was under a tree, whose means of conveyance was a donkey, on which they sat with a child in front of them, and another clinging behind them. Many had no means of conveyance at all save what God had given them, and one saw women plodding painfully, carrying children in their arms, whom they tried to shade with parasols, poor fond things—the tender folly of motherhood, when homes were blazing behind them, and misery about them and before them.

In Servia last year I had witnessed scenes which faintly fore-shadowed those of to-day, but as I rode along, what rose to my mind most vividly were the woeful stories of our own British women in the terrible times of the great Mutiny, when there passed away, all in a moment, the accustomed care for tatties, and punkahs, and thermantodotes and darkened rooms and all the manifold appliances of Anglo-Indian civilization, and there suddenly confronted them—and they rose to the occasion—the stern task of striving, under the burning sun, to save the lives of their dear ones. Most of the better-class fugitives told me that they had fled from Kezanhik, but, indeed the whole population of the southern slope of the Balkans have crossed the ridge, and are now drifting slowly down the northern slope. Many are stationary. They are waiting events. They are not the victims of panic, to whom assurance will only come when a sight of the Danube is attained. They are flying before a near, a tangible, and a fearful danger, but they had any indication of a prospect of safety for them in returning. The march of troops to-day, of which I shall presently speak, has arrested the flight of great masses of the fugitives. It has done more. I passed a goodly number actually tramping back in the wake of the column. They believed in the safety of Russian bayonets. But then it must

abandoned everything by the way that no delay should occur in their obedience to the peremptory and urgent summons. The colonel was much troubled because his men had insisted in giving away their bread to the hungry refugees, and he did not know where they were to find more. But he has a kind heart himself. At a short halt some refugee women begged him and his officers to take their children and educate them in Russia, where there were not Turks. "All in good time," was his reply. "We are going to fight now. When the Czar wills that we go home to Russia, then we may think of your children. God knows we are thinking of our own now."

As the column tramped through Gabrova the people gave bouquets of sweet flowers and wild thyme to the soldiers, and crowded on the flanks with copious supplies of water. Duhonin and his men went on. I have stayed for the night in the town, where I am told are General Radetzky, commanding the 8th Corps, and General Dragomiroff, commanding the 14th Division; but I have been unable to find either. Most of the houses in Gabrova have been emptied of furniture to facilitate the quick flight of the inhabitants. I am in quite a mansion, but it contains not so much as a rug.

* GABROVA, *August 24th, Evening*.—Since I wrote the above, I have visited the Shipka Pass, and seen a battle. There is no time to write letters which the telegraph will supersede, and the necessity for reaching an available wire compels me to arrest at this point my intended ride round the Russian positions.

The following letter from another correspondent gives further details respecting the situation before Plevna and elsewhere.

† HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY BEFORE PLEVNA. PORADIM, *August 23rd*.—The mistake made by the Russians after the Battle of Plevna in not concentrating the whole army against Plevna, and taking it, is already beginning to produce its result. The Turks have been receiving reinforcements more rapidly and in greater numbers than the Russians, and are beginning to take the offensive all along the line. News was received here two days ago that large Turkish forces were concentrating in the valley of the Tundja against the Shipka Pass; and an order was immediately sent by the Grand Duke for the Shipka Pass to be reinforced. I am not allowed to say whence these reinforcements were taken, but the fact seems to be that this movement on the part of the Turks was not calculated upon, and was not provided for.

dragged up the steep singly by spare teams of horses located there for the purpose

We descended once more into the Valley of the Jantra and in a meadow about two miles from Tirnova we found two infantry battalions just recommencing their march after a short halt. Their colonel rode to the rear

the ambulance waggons follow

friend The first time I met Co

55th, the Podolsk Regiment, was at Jilava, near Bucharest, when he was engaged in paying his men, the second time was on the Turkish bank of the Danube, on the morning of the crossing from Simnita to Sistova. The blood was then flowing down the blade of his drawn sword from a bayonet wound

the assault

it up, and

head of his

regiment, and now I was pleased to see the Cross of St George on his broad breast

Colonel Duhomin and we rode on together into Gabrova, and he told me about the dispositions. The Russians were paying the penalty, in forced marching in broiling weather, of disregarding eventualities. They had determined to hold the Balkan passes they had won—a wise determination, but they had neglected to have troops within easy distance in case they were threatened. Now, Suleiman Pacha is in Kezanlik and looking very grimly at the Shipka, and it is found necessary to reinforce “at the double” the “twenty companies” holding the pass. The 2nd Division had been diverted to Selvi, to relieve a brigade of the 9th Division and be handy for Loftcha. To reinforce the garrison of the Shipka there has been hastily gathered together the 2nd Brigade of the 14th Division—Dragomiroffs—of the 8th Corps, the 2nd Brigade of the 9th Division—Mirsky’s—of the same corps, and the sorely reduced Rifle Brigade, which has been across the Balkans with General Gourko, and has earned splendid renown, and suffered fearful losses in a dozen fights from Hankoi to Karabunar. The first brigade named is commanded by General Petrocen,

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fastly had his men marched that they had neither slept nor cooked for two days and two nights. And yet the stalwart fellows were not nearly beaten, but took the road again at a swinging pace and with a hearty chorus. They were marching without knapsacks and without baggage, they had

pushing on the war to a rapid conclusion, I cannot imagine, but mismanagement in some quarter is evidently at the bottom of it. It is not likely that the Turkish offensive will produce any great result. I do not believe in the capacity of the Turks to direct an army on the offensive, but always have acknowledged the cohesion of the Turkish troops when fighting behind entrenchments. The mistake made by the Russians after the Battle of Plevna was in not continuing the attack on that place. They should have garrisoned the two Balkan passes and Tirnova and Sistova, abandoned the whole line occupied by the army of the Czarewitch, and then, by rapidly concentrating both armies against Plevna, have crushed it at a blow. They had six army corps even then across the Danube. Of these corps five have scarcely been under fire. Only one, the 9th, has severely suffered; but this corps would have amply sufficed for the defence of Sistova. The other five army corps will give an effective of 125,000 combatants, of which 40,000 might have been used for the defence of the Balkan passes and Tirnova, leaving 85,000 men who would have been concentrated against Plevna, and at that time would have sufficed to take it. Had the Turkish army at Shumla moved across the Jantra to attack the Russian army in the rear it would have been too late, for the Russians would have had time to crush Plevna, and then turn round and crush the Shumla Army in its turn on the open glacis west of the Jantra. Two hard-fought battles would have rapidly crushed both the Turkish armies in succession. There would then have been nothing but the army of Suleiman Pacha south of the Balkans to prevent the onward march, which the Russians could have easily undertaken with the reinforcements now arriving. The result of not adopting this plan will evidently be a second campaign, the winter passed in Bulgaria and the Balkans amidst snow and mud, and the loss by sickness of half the army, and the expenditure of millions.

August 23rd, Evening.—The cannonade heard to-day on our right wing does not seem to have been on the side of the Roumanians. I can only account for it in this way. Three or four days ago General Zotoff sent a strong detachment of cavalry round behind Plevna to reconnoitre the country, burn any stores that might fall into their hands, and destroy bridges and the telegraph. This detachment crossed the road between Loftcha and Plevna. It must be somewhere behind Plevna now, working round towards the right wing. This cavalry may have engaged the Turks somewhere, which would account for the cannonade we have heard.

To-day news has arrived that the Turks are driving the Russians back on the road between Osman Bazar and Tirnova, though it is not yet stated whether anything like a decisive battle has taken place there. Simultaneously with this, the information has arrived that 30,000 men under Suleiman Pacha, already spoken of as concentrating before Shipka, had attacked the Russian positions in the Pass with great vigour and resolution, and that this attack had been repulsed three times, after a struggle, with great losses on both sides. It is not known here whether the reinforcements sent off reached in time to take part in the battle, and the Russian position is now so critical everywhere that I do not mention how many troops there were to defend the Shipka Pass.

Not only have the Turks been taking the offensive at Osman Bazar and Shipka, but it has also been reported here that the Russians have sustained a defeat somewhere near Rasgrad, or somewhere between there and Rustchuk, the details of which are unknown here. For two days there has been considerable firing on our advanced posts, as though the Turks were preparing to take the offensive, and great movements of Turkish troops have taken place about Plevna. The day before yesterday artillery was moved out on the high road from Plevna towards Sistova and Nicopolis, together with ammunition trains and large numbers of infantry, as though they were preparing to attack, and the Russians have been on the alert, expecting an attack at any moment. However, no attack has taken place here up to the present, but to day we hear the thunder of artillery on the right, between the Russian right wing and Nicopolis, where the Roumanians are holding the line, and to conclude all, a strong Turkish detachment has marched out on the road from Loftcha towards Selvi, evidently with the intention of attacking that place. This movement is so serious that General Zotoff has sent a detachment under General Skobelev from his left wing to take this Turkish force on the flank, and force it to draw back on the right in that disadvantageous position. I am also obliged to avoid mentioning the strength of this detachment.

Reinforcements are arriving very slowly, and although it is known that three out of four divisions have crossed the Danube since the Battle of Plevna, I have not yet been able to ascertain where they have gone, nor can I see any indications of the Russians taking the offensive for a long time yet. What object there may be for thus remaining apathetically on the defensive when they have such imperative reasons for

defences of the Shipka Pass. It was a serious question for the Russians whether, with the troops at their disposal, they could at the same time keep at bay the Shumla Army under Mehemet Ali Pacha, on their left, prepare a new assault upon Osman Pacha at Plevna, and resist the efforts of Suleiman Pacha in the Balkans. The following letter, the whole of which was transmitted by telegraph, describes a visit to the Shipka Pass and a hard-fought battle there, the cause of the abandonment of the tour round the Russian positions, of which a description was given in one of the letters comprised in the preceding chapter :—

* SHIPKA PASS, *August 24th.*—On the morning of the 22nd I was informed at the Imperial headquarters at Gorny Studen that Suleiman Pacha, with an army of forty battalions, having been foiled in an attempt to force the Hainkoi Pass, was now threatening the Shipka. Acting on the maxim given by Prince Frederick Charles to his officers, I at once rode in the direction of the cannon thunder.

In reality Suleiman Pacha had already on the 19th occupied the village of Shipka, and had commenced an attack on the 21st on the Russian positions at the head of the Pass. Fighting has lasted almost continually from then until now, and it is only about an hour ago that an apparently decisive result was obtained. I had been advised at headquarters to overtake the 2nd Division, commanded by Prince Imeretinski, which had been dispatched from Gorny Studen to strengthen the extremely weak force left in the redoubts of the Pass ; but later I had learned that the division had been diverted to Selvi to fill the blank left there by the earlier march of the brigade of the 9th Division that had been in position there, to strengthen the Shipka garrison. The 2nd Division at Selvi will also be available for its share in the impending attack on the Plevna-Loftcha line still held by Osman Pacha. I also learned at Tirnova that General Radetzky, commanding the 8th Corps, and General Dragomiroff, commanding the 14th Division of that corps, had gone forward to Gabrova with hurriedly gathered reinforcements for the hard-pressed people in the Shipka Pass.

All the way from Tirnova to Gabrova the country was one vast melancholy encampment, and the road one continuous mournful procession of miserable fugitive families from Kezanlik and the villages on the southern slopes of the Balkans, where the Turks had regained their fell sway of rapine and murder

Russian public feeling is showing itself very much dissatisfied with the military operations. The Russian papers, while admitting the courage of the soldiers generally, speak with contempt of their generals, and include them all in one universal condemnation.

It has been announced that the reconnaissance made by General Skobelev against Loftcha some days ago, an account of which I have already sent you by telegraph, was an attack in which Skobelev was repulsed with the loss of four hundred men. The fact is, the affair was merely a reconnaissance. Skobelev had orders not to attack under any circumstances, and his loss was five men killed and twenty five wounded. Skobelev reported that a division and a half would be required to take the place, whereas he had only five battalions and expected that orders would be given to take Loftcha. Indeed, this was the original intention of the Russian Commander in Chief, but a sudden spell of rainy weather caused delay in the attack, and when the roads became passable the offensive was taken up by the Turks everywhere. This induced the Russian Commander in Chief to postpone the attack upon Loftcha for the present. I may remark that in the great battle at Plevna Skobelev, who had the command of the extreme left wing, actually penetrated into the town and in spite of this fact was the only general who succeeded in carrying off all his wounded, not losing a single man.

CHAPTER XVI

THE FIGHTING IN THE SHIPEA PASS

Suleiman Pacha's Determined Attack—Hurried March of Russian Reinforce

Dragomiroff—Repulse of the Turks—Anxiety at Head Quarters—The Armes de Camp Outstripped—The Emperor and the Correspondent—A Turkish View of the Fighting

THE third Russian attack on Plevna, delayed by the slowness with which reinforcements arrived, was destined not to take place before a series of most determined attempts had been made by Suleiman Pacha, who commanded the Ottoman troops south of the Balkans, to break through the Russian

starving Bulgarian women and children, although the act left themselves foodless, without a guess when they should eat next. I saw them with infinite patience groping into corners of recondite pockets, fish out the poor coppers which they had been saving for schmapps and tobacco, or perchance to take home to their young ones in the humble cabin in far-off Russia, and bestow them instead on the gaunt children of the fugitives, with some expression of rough jocularly which was but a cloak for a tear and a blessing.

Leaving Gabrova in the pale half-light of the moon and of the dawn, we made forward along the beautiful romantic valley of the Jantra, through beech forests interspersed with clearings around tiny villages. Here we passed a long column of Cossacks, each man with a led horse. These were the horses on which the advanced guard of the Rifle Brigade was hurried forward last night, reaching the ridge and coming into action just in the nick of time to avert a very serious, if not disastrous result. The roar of cannon high above us—it seemed in the very clouds—swelled louder and louder in volume as we drew nearer, and wounded men were already trickling to the rear, a sure sign that the fighting had been warm and close from its very commencement.

Suddenly the road left the Jantra valley, and bending sharp to the left, struck up the mountain side. There was no cessation in the steep ascent for about five kilometres. The road was extremely tortuous, having to twist, and turn, and wriggle to take advantage of any available ground. But although in places terribly steep it was quite practicable for vehicles, being broad and smooth. This is the road which the Russian pioneers have constructed during the Russian occupation, and so long as this road remains undestroyed, to cross the Balkans in peace time will be little greater exertion than to drive from Blairgowrie to Braemar. Patches of the old track remain. It must have been no road at all, but a simple avalanche of boulders hurled miscellaneously over fixed jagged rocks. About five kilometres from the bottom stands on the hill face a hut used by the Turks as custom-house and guard-house. It was on a knoll about this where the Russians of Mirsky's original advance first came into action against the Turks on a hillock higher up, on which stands a dismantled little khan. On that occasion the Grand Duke Nicholas the younger commanded a detachment. He is perhaps the most practical soldier, in his steady faith in the wisdom of getting to close quarters with the enemy, of all the many soldier members of the great Imperial House.

At the custom house we passed a provision train. At the Khan

on the withdrawal of General Gourko's force. Most had fled so hurriedly as to have left everything behind, and the abject misery of the women of the better class in the squalid encampments is not to be described.

On the evening of the 23rd, near Gabrova, I overtook the Podolsk Regiment of the 2nd Brigade of the 14th Division. The Colonel told me that his regiment had been so hurriedly pressed forward that his men had not cooked or slept for two days and two nights, and he knew not when they would do either. *He said that the regiment had been there for* had been

the Turks continued to push their attacks with extraordinary pertinacity and determination. In the dead of night came rumbling over the stony streets long convoys of ambulance waggons laden with wounded men, and another of empty ammunition waggons, both indications of serious work the day before.

Before daylight this morning the sound of the renewed cannonade came down the passes, and along the quaint old street of Gabrova, where the townspeople collected in anxious groups, and whispered with pale lips. It had volumes of terrible significance for them, that sullen booming of cannon up in the Shipka there, not three hours' march from their doors. While the Russians stood their ground there the pale citizens were safe, but let them be worsted, and three short hours would see the leaders of the swarms of murderous Circassians riding down the old main street with its projecting fronts, and its resemblance to Cairo. For the Russians to be worsted meant letting loose a horde of savages on that vast aggregate of fugitives who were camped in every field, and beneath every tree, from Gabrova to Drenova. For the Bulgarians, then, each moment was an agony of suspense. Nor is it easy to realize how deeply the Russian chiefs must have felt the sense of responsibility weighing upon them. A leader may see his soldiers falling around him. They go down in fair fight. They die, so to speak, in the way of business, but to know that on their staunchness and skill hang the lives of countless women and tender babes must be terrible. Yet how glorious to realize and be equal to the burden of responsibility! I am sure the Russian soldiers fought none the less stoutly because for two days before they reached the scene of action they had been marching with pitying hearts and cheering words through the miserable fugitives cowering along their path. I saw the noble hearted fellows empty their haversacks of bread into the laps of the

summit. This done, the Shipka position would of course be turned, but the advantage would be, of little avail till the road had been opened by carrying the fortified positions on it. Without the command of the road an enemy might indeed send bands down the road on to which he had scrambled, into the lower country about Gabrova, to burn and plunder, but I repeat that the road over the Shipka constitutes for an army the only practicable line of communication in this section of the Balkans.

Much has been said of the strength of the Shipka position. In these opinions I do not concur. It seems to me that unless strongly held with wide extending arms of defence, it is easy to be attacked and very difficult to be held with any security. The strength of a position does not depend wholly on its elevation or even on the difficulties of access to a direct attack, but on the clear range around it which its fire can sweep, and its ability to concentrate its fire on critical points. Herein lies the defect of the Shipka as a defensive position. It cannot search with its fire the jumble of lateral valleys and reverse slopes which hem it in. A brigade of light infantry might mass in a hollow within one hundred yards of the Russian first position without exposing itself to the artillery fire of that position.

The troops engaged in to-day's battle were as follows:—The Bulgarians and a regiment of the 1st Brigade of the 9th Division under General Stoletoff; the 2nd Brigade of the 9th Division, under General Derozinsky; the Rifle Brigade under General Tzwilzinski. The 2nd Brigade of the 14th Division, commanded by General Petroceni, arrived at nine in the morning, brought up by the commander of the division, General Dragomiroff, the whole force being under the chief command of General Radetzky, commanding the 8th Corps, which is composed of the 9th and 14th Divisions, in all twenty battalions, which if full would give an aggregate of about seventeen thousand men; but every regiment engaged had already fought, and lost. The Tirailleurs and Bulgarians shared the fortunes and misfortunes of General Gourko. The 14th Division fought hard in crossing the Danube. The stones of the Shipka had already been splashed with the blood of Mirsky's gallant fellows of the 9th Division. I set down the total strength as not above thirteen thousand.

The operations had commenced at daybreak. An attack was made on the Turkish commanding position on the Russian right flank, by the Tirailleur Brigade and the Brianski Regiment of the 9th Division. Almost at the same moment the Turks from that position renewed their turning effort,

was the dressing place of the third line, whither, after having had their wounds bound up in the field, came such soldiers as were able to walk. Although a steady evacuation further to the rear had been practised, this place and its vicinity were thronged with the severely wounded men, among whom was an extraordinary proportion of officers. Two colonels were brought in while I passed. The Shipka will be known as par excellence the officers' battle of the war.

On my way to the scene of action, and while surveying it before following closely the movement of the troops engaged, I was much impressed by the peculiarity of the ground. The Shipka Pass is not a pass at all in the proper sense of the term. There is no gorge, no defile, there is no spot where 300 men could make a new Thermopylæ, no deep scored trench as in the Kyber Pass, where an army might be annihilated without coming to grips with its adversary. It has its name simply because at this point there happens to be a section of the Balkans of less than the average height, the surface of which, from the Jantra Valley on the north to the Tundja Valley on the south, is sufficiently continuous, although having an extremely broken and serrated contour, to afford a foothold for a practicable track, for the Balkans generally present a wild jumble of mountain and glen, neither having any continuity. Under such circumstances, such a crossing place as the Shipka Pass affords is a godsend, although under other circumstances a road over it would be regarded as impossible. What was a mere track is now a really good and practicable, although steep, high road. The ground on either side of the ridge is depressed sometimes into shallow hollows, sometimes into cavernous gorges, but these lateral depressions are broken, and have no continuity, otherwise they would clearly afford a better track for a road than the high ground above.

The highest peak is flanked on either side behind the lateral depressions by a mountainous spur higher than itself, and therefore commanding it, and having as well the command of the ridge behind. The higher one that is to say, the westmost of these two spurs can rake the road leading up to the Russian positions. These spurs break off abruptly and precipitously on their northern edge, and therefore afford no access into the valley north of the Balkans. Their sole use to the Turks, therefore, was in affording positions whence to flank the central Shipka ridge. It is possible also for troops

though the latter forced the outer line of the Russian shelter trenches on the slopes below the position of Mount St. Nicholas, the highest peak of the Shipka crossing. The Russians had laid mines in front of their trenches, which were exploded just as the head of the Turkish assaulting parties were massed above them, and it is reported that a large number of Moslems were blown up into the air in fragments. The loss to the Russians on the first day's attack was but two hundred, chiefly of the Bulgarian Legion. On the second day, the 22nd, the fighting was not heavy, the Turks being engaged in making a wide turning movement on the right and left flanks of the Russian position, and these attacks were next day developed with great fierceness and pertinacity.

Yesterday the Turks assailed the Russian position on the front and flanks, and drove in the defenders from their outlying ground. The radical defects of the position became painfully apparent—its narrowness, its exposure, its liability to be outflanked and isolated. Fortunately reinforcements had arrived, which averted the mischief which had otherwise, to my thinking, imminently impended. Stoletoff hit his hardest, and a right good fighting man he is, full of energy and force after four long days of intense mental and physical strain; but he could not perform impossibilities with thirty thousand men thundering on his front and flanks. But there had come to him, swiftly marching from Selvi, a brigade of the 9th Division, commanded by another valiant soldier, General Derozinski, and this timely succour had been of material value to Stoletoff. The fight lasted all day, and at length, as the sun grew lower, the Turks had so worked round on both the Russian flanks that it seemed as though the claws of the crab were about momentarily to close behind the Russians, and that the Turkish columns climbing either face of the Russian ridge would give a hand to each other on the road in the rear of the Russian position.

The moment was dramatic with an intensity to which the tameness of civilian life can furnish no parallel. The two Russian generals, expecting momentarily to be environed, had sent, between the closing claws of the crab, a last telegram to the Czar, telling what they expected, how they had tried to prevent it, and how that, please God, driven into their positions and beset, they would hold these till reinforcements should arrive. At all events, they and their men would hold their ground to the last drop of their blood.

It was six o'clock; there was a lull in the fighting, of which the Russians could take no advantage, since the reserves were all

extending their left with intent to push across the intervening deep valley and gain the top ridge of the ground in the rear of the Russian positions, and so hem in the Russian forces. These simultaneous attacks met in the valley separating the parallel ridges held by the Russians and Turks. The fighting became at once fierce and stubborn. I had been told about eight o'clock that in half an hour the Turks would be driven back. When I reached the crest of the Russian ridge I was forced to confess I saw no immediate prospect of this. A furious infantry fire was raging in the valley between our bare
barer
into l

fire from their wooded slope, and by the shell fire of the mountain batteries on the summit. The Russian battery in the first position confronting the Turkish summit fired but at rare intervals. It is true it is waste of ammunition to shower shells into trees, but the Turkish battery on the sky line unquestionably afforded a mark, and it would have been worth while to throw a few shells to help to cover with their moral effect the advance of our infantry. I fancy there was a long period when the battery was short of ammunition. The road is so exposed that fetching ammunition was extremely dangerous. The Turks had detachments of marks men detailed with seemingly no other duty than to sweep the Russian road at the exposed points of its course, and, indeed, to
-body exposed on the Russian
rid
to attain shelter from the rifle
fire

I went up on to the sky line once and sat down to study the interesting scene below, and my white cap cover in an instant drew fire from half a dozen rifles. We were all under rifle fire continually the whole day, from the commencement of the action till the Turkish position was finally carried. From staff officers who had been on the ground during the whole period of operations I received details of the forces engaged and the character of the fighting on the previous days. The Turks began the attack on the 21st, pushing on directly up the steep above the village of Shipka. The Russian garrison in the works of the pass then consisted of the Bulgarian Legion and one regiment of the 9th Division, both weakened by previous hard fighting, and probably reckoning little more than three thousand bayonets, with about forty cannon. No supports were nearer than Tirnova, a distance of forty miles,—a grave omission. The garrison fought hard and hindered the Turks from gaining any material advantage.

A FIG

up around into the serene blue heavens. Wounded men come staggering out from among the swarthy trunks and sit down in a heap, or crawl on to the ambulance men. I leave the edge of the ridge soon after eleven, and pick my way up towards the peak, on the slope of which the generals and staff are surveying the scene. The bullets here are singing like a nest of angry wasps. One bullet strikes on the right knee General Dragomirov, who has been standing calmly in the face of the fire, looking down upon the battle. One of the best generals in the Russian army is *hors de combat*. He is as brave as he is skilful, and, ripping up his trouser-leg spectacles off, but when he has borne him into comparative shelter quietly sits down and the wound. Surgeons gather round him; but, like the true soldier he is, he says he will take his turn when his boot removed, and the limb bandaged. Then he is placed on a stretcher, and is borne away. The last words on the norms of the Czar.

for good fortune to the Regiment were not making headway. The Tirailleurs and Brianskise of attacking direct in front the in their difficult enterprise its advantage of wooded cover steep Turkish slope, will the efforts of the Turks to work although they have foiled into our rear. We can see on the round by their own left forcements as they come up out of sky-line the Turkish reinforcements to their mountain battery, on the the valley by the road close their left flank. It is determined at bare spot near the edge of a counter flank attack on the right twelve o'clock to deliver a simultaneous attack with a renewed edge of the Turkish tirailleurs and the Brianski men from strenuous attack of the Tions of the Jitomir Regiment, each below. The two battalions behind as supports, emerge from the leaving one company back of the Russian first position, and partial shelter of the pines across the more level grass land march in company column down the valley. They have no great dip to traverse, and the way is good marching ground, but the Turkish mountain position, are ready for them, wooded peak of the Tianshan on the Turkish right edge of as also is the Turkish position, and many a gallant the ridge. The fire sweeps through them, and many a gallant fellow dyes the grass with his blood. But the battalions press steadily on, and dash into the wood at the double. The Russian artillery had done its best to prepare the way, for their battery on the reserve battery near the khan down crossing over, and a re

rifle fire was coming from two quarters simultaneously. So the infantry were stowed away till wanted in the ditch of the redoubt. Radetzky and his staff remained on the slope of the peak, and here Drigomiroff joined, and was welcomed by his chief.

The firing in the valley waxed and waned fitfully as the morning wore on to near noon. The Turks were very strongly established in their wooded position, and there was an evident intention on their part to work round their left and edge in across the narrowed throat of the valley towards our rear. About eleven the firing in the valley swelled in volume. It was almost wholly musketry fire, be it remembered. Taking off my white hat I crept up to the edge of the ridge and looked down upon the scene below. The Russians had their tirailleurs in among the trees of the Turkish slope, leaving the bare ground behind strewn with killed and wounded. The ambulance men were behaving admirably, picking up the wounded under the hottest fire, and indeed not a few were themselves among the wounded. As to the progress of the Russians in the wood little could be seen, the cover was so thick, but it was clear that the battle waged to and fro, now the Russians, now the Turks, gaining ground. Occasionally the Russians at some point would be hurled clean back out of the wood altogether, and with my glass I could mark the Turks following them eagerly to its edge, and lying down while pouring out a galling fire. It seemed an even match, the Turks and Russians alike accepted valiantly the chances of battle. The Russian tirailleurs, finely trained skirmishers, looked out dexterously for cover, and the Turks displayed fine skirmishing ability, but

proportion of casualties

There is something terrible in a fight in a wood. You can see nothing save an occasional flash of dark colour among the sombre foliage, and the white clouds of smoke rising above it like soap bubbles. Hoarse cries come back to you on the wind from out the mysterious inferno. How is it to go? Are the strong backed Muscovites, with these ready bayonet points of theirs, to end the long drawn out fight with one short, impetuous, irresistible rush, or are the more lissom Turks to drive their northern adversaries out of the wood backwards into the fire blistered open? Who can tell? The fire rages still. The mad clamour of the battle still surges

subaltern's tent at Wimbledon far more sumptuously accoutred than the campaigning residence of the Czar of All the Russias. His Majesty desired that, on leaving him, I should go to his brother, the Grand Duke commanding-in-chief.

Answering the questions of His Imperial Highness was like going through a competitive examination. He was fully master of the subject, and if I had not taken pains in gathering my facts from a wide area, I should have felt extremely foolish. As it was, I was able to draw for the Grand Duke a plan of the operations, and to illustrate my unskilful draughtsmanship by verbal explanations which I trust His Imperial Highness found of some value. He had received telegrams to-day from General Radetzky to the effect that, as I had anticipated, the Turks had renewed the combat with great energy this morning, and that hard fighting was raging, the flanks as well as the front being threatened.

I expected no less; but none the less do I hold to my impression that Radetzky, having so far widened his area to the right and left yesterday as to prevent the dominance thence of the Shipka position, will be able now to hold his ground against all comers, especially with the reinforcements arriving. I take it for granted that he utilized last night by making such dispositions as shall prevent the Turks from regaining the positions from which he yesterday drove them. It is a military axiom that it is easier to hold a position than to carry it. The Grand Duke had received a telegram that General Petroceni, the gallant chief of the 2nd Brigade, 14th Division, was this morning in action. Another telegram from Gabrova from General Stoletoff told that General Radetzky had ordered that fine officer to take his Bulgarians down into Gabrova for a little rest after five days' continuous fighting, with no food save dry bread. It is a good sign that they can be spared. The Bulgarian Legion has proved that the despised Bulgarians can fight like lions.

* BUCHAREST, *August 26th*.—Information follows me here that the fighting at the Shipka Pass is still raging, having been again renewed to-day, but that Radetzky continues to hold his own. It is now a question of endurance, and the Turks may add to the difficulties of the Russian position by taking the offensive on the left and right flanks. Indeed, Mehemet Ali Pacha has already been striking out against the Czarewitch; but I adhere to my impression that the Shipka Pass, as now held by Radetzky, is safe, and that unless Suleiman Pacha can run a column through another pass, regarding the practicability or the contrary of which I know

days, when they were attacked, they must have suffered heavily

During the fighting I spent some time with the surgeons working in the most advanced positions, and should like to bear testimony to their admirable devotion to duty and their skilled dexterity. In their eagerness to assist the wounded the Russian surgeons somehow neglect the axiom that their quarters should be in a sheltered spot, but indeed on all the ridge it was hard to find a sheltered spot. The Turkish bullets whistled over and through the little group. Indeed, one patient received a fresh wound while the earlier one was being dressed, but the surgeons pursued their duties with a noble courage and disregard of risk. Their kind attention to the wounded and their attention to trifles—such as supplying water, laving burning faces, and administering restoratives—filled me with admiration. As I leave the position at six o'clock comparative quietude reigns

* RUSSIAN HEADQUARTERS, GORY STUDEV, *August 25th*—Riding backward from Shipka through the night, I passed masses of reinforcements artillery and infantry, hurrying forward to Shipka. It would be improper to specify their strength but it is such as ought to secure the safety of the all important position. Riding hard all night long and to day also without either rest or food, I was fortunate enough to reach the headquarters here in advance of any of the aides de camp whom the Grand Duke had sent to the fighting region to report the progress of events. All news previously reaching the headquarters had come by telegraph and chiefs hard pressed by fighting functions, have no leisure to telegraph copiously.

Having communicated some details to the officers of my acquaintance on the Imperial staff, General Ignatieff acquainted the Emperor with my arrival and His Majesty did me the honour to desire that he should hear what I had to tell from my own lips. The concern of the Emperor was not less strongly evinced than was his thorough conversance with the military art, and the promptitude with which he comprehended my details was more, I fear, owing to the trained skill of his perception than to my lucidity. He expressed an anxious desire that every effort should be made to supply his noble soldiers with the food they so much needed, and expressed great
 had seen camp
 The simplicity
 glance. He carries no luxury with him, and I have seen a
 bullets
 ent at a

they have not yet had time to turn it to its proper use by shelling the Shipka road from the battery at the foot.

General Radetzky had no sooner arrived than he began making dispositions in earnest. From the highest point of the Pass there is a high short narrow ridge extending to the right at nearly right angles to the road. At a distance of half a mile it rises into a sharp peak, which is crowned by a Russian redoubt, effectually protecting the Russian batteries from that side. Half a mile farther, or perhaps less, the ridge rises into another peak, which, with the first one, forms a perfect saddle-back. This peak is crowned by the Turkish redoubt, already spoken of, and it is the head of the ridge mentioned which curves round on our right until parallel with the road, thus enabling the Turkish infantry to command it.

The Russian commander should have occupied this second peak, and would undoubtedly have done so had he had enough men, but he only had one regiment, three thousand men, and the débris of the Bulgarian Legion—only enough to defend the direct approaches to the Pass. It is true that another regiment was sent from Selvi to reinforce him as soon as it was known that the Turks were preparing to attack, but it was then too late, as the Turks seem to have occupied this position the first day. Besides, it was soon demonstrated that two regiments were required to protect the direct approaches against Suleiman's violent onset.

The two peaks occupied by the Russian and Turkish redoubts are thickly wooded, as well as the connecting ridge between. General Radetzky advanced his troops along this ridge under cover of the woods, and opened fire on the redoubt with two or three batteries. He at the same time sent troops across the deep hollow from the road to take the Turkish redoubt on the Gabrova side, by advancing up the steep mountain flank. Soon a terrible musketry-fire told that the troops were in contact, and the attack fairly begun; and for hours the mountains re-echoed with the continuous roll of musketry and the thunder of cannon.

The Russians advanced like Indians under cover of the trees, which were, however, too small to afford good shelter, firing as they went. In a short time they had reached within fifty yards of the redoubt. Here they found obstacles which for the moment were quite insurmountable. The Turks had cut down the trees around the redoubt, making an abattis over which the Russians found it almost impossible to pass. They gathered around the edge under cover of the trees, and suddenly made a rush for it, but were driven back with fearful loss. The soldiers became entangled in the masses of brush-

nothing, he will wreck his army by thus dashing it continually against the rock of Shipka

The subjoined letter dated a day later than that commencing on page 407, is from another Correspondent who arrived subsequently to the departure of the writer of the previous despatch —

† SHIPKA PASS *August 25th* —The fight is still raging here with unabated fury. The arrival of Radetzky with reinforcements saved the situation for the moment and drove back the Turks who were on the point of seizing the Pass but the Russian position is still most critical. The Turks had not only turned both the Russian flanks by seizing Berdek on the left and the mountains on the right but had constructed a redoubt and planted a battery on the right which commands the road leading up to the Pass. This gives them possession of the ridge running parallel to that up which the road winds one thousand five hundred yards distant as the crow flies. The redoubt enfilades the road in several places and the Turkish infantry, by extending along this ridge which is thickly wooded can practically render the road impassable.

How true this is may be judged by the fact that it was on this road that General Dragomiroff was wounded and that to day General Petrocent, the commander of the 1st Brigade of the 9th Division of the 8th Corps was killed on this road fully a mile on our side of the summit of the Pass by a bullet which traversed his lungs killing him almost instantly. Men are picked off by the Turkish skirmishers two miles behind the Pass where the road is exposed and even where the road passes on the other side of the ridge the men are killed and wounded by the bullets dropping over from random firing. Men are killed and wounded all round the point where I found Radetzky and his staff to day although sheltered behind the brow of the ridge which rose thirty to fifty feet above them. It will be seen therefore that the Russian position still remains most critical in spite of the arrival of reinforcements. General Radetzky indeed informed the commandant of Gabrova the day after his arrival that he had better warn the inhabitants to be ready to fly at a moment's notice. The fact is that until the Turkish redoubt spoken of is taken it is impossible to say what will be the result of the Turkish attack on the Shipka Pass. The road up to the Shipka would have already been rendered impassable but for the fact that the Turks have been so busy defending the redoubt that

be moved, who will probably fall into the hands of the Turks, to be murdered, tortured, and mutilated.

To sum up, the attack has been unsuccessful. Reinforcements are arriving, and the fight will probably be continued to-morrow.

* SISTOVA, *August 27th*.—Fighting is still going on upon the flanks of the Shipka Pass positions, but Radetzky continues to maintain his ground, although his losses are serious.

If I remember rightly, Richie Moniplies, in the "Fortunes of Nigel," tore his cloak in his endeavours to conceal the rents in his clothing covered by that garment. That is what has very nearly happened to the Russians. The military leaders, in their early burst of success, gained possession of a certain area of Bulgaria. To that area they have clung pertinaciously. They had only so many men to hold the ground in Bulgaria pending the arrival of reinforcements, rendered necessary by the unexpected development of the Turkish fighting strength, and these they have disposed round the edge of the area occupied after the manner of a fence. Now the strength of the fence is only equal to the weakest portion of it, and realizing this, and dreading Turkish attacks from right and left on Tirnova, they kept thereabouts a body of troops belonging to the 8th Corps, available to strengthen any weak position that might be threatened. There was reason in this, but it was a very dangerous experiment to leave a handful of men to hold the all-important Shipka position beyond easy hailing distance of support. When Suleiman Pacha took the village of Shipka there was not a Russian soldier between the handful on the exposed Shipka position and Tirnova, forty miles away. Reinforcements arrived in the nick of time, but, as explained in my telegram, the safety of the Shipka position was an affair of minutes, and if the Turks had struck all round the Russian area simultaneously, either the Shipka position must have been left to its fate, or some other section of the fence line must have been seriously endangered.

I think it would have been better policy if the principle of protecting the area once occupied had been abandoned, and the idea of using the Russian forces as a palisade had been abandoned also. They should have been concentrated into one or two central positions, say one strong army at Gorny Studen, another at Tirnova, with a strong detachment thrown forward into Gabrova to answer the menace of the Shipka Pass position. A mobile army at Gorny Studen could have struck right or left at the Turkish forces showing themselves in the open, just as in 1814 Napoleon struck out at Schwarzenberg and Blucher. The aim of the Russian army

wood, trunks, and limbs of the trees over which they were obliged to scramble, while the Turks poured in a terrible fire upon them at this short distance, and mowed them down like grass. Of the first assault launched against the redoubt I am afraid very few got back under cover to tell the tale. It was very evident that the assault under such conditions could not succeed. Only one battalion had been sent to attack. The force was insufficient, and of this one company sent to the assault was nearly destroyed. Reinforcements were sent by Radetzky. The attack began again, but dispositions were made to place a large force in such positions that it could pour a heavy fire into the redoubt to cover the assault until the assaulters were almost up to the parapet.

This attack seemed almost on the point of success for the colonel in command, whose name I forget said that if reserves were given to him he could take it. The officer in command of the reserves let them go, but they were nevertheless repulsed. Then Radetzky mounted and rode to the ground, followed by part of his staff. The chief of the staff General Dimitriofsky, on foot, bareheaded, and supported by two men, with an expression of extreme suffering on his face had put himself at the head of a battalion to lead the assault. A shell had struck the ground beside him, covering him with earth, knocking him down and rendering him senseless for a few minutes. The attack still went on. The fire became terrible. From among the trees rose a large column of smoke, marking the place of the Turkish redoubt, which was dimly seen through it, while the thick woods were full of the roll of the Russian musketry fire.

The Russians advanced steadily. They rushed over, or through, the abattis, they even got into the battery and actually held it for a few seconds, but were driven out again. They surrounded the place on all sides pouring into it a terrible fire, but were again driven back. In the meantime the Turks to support the defence began to attack in front and rear. Musketry and artillery were heard coming up from towards Shipka mingling with the nearer din around the redoubt in a most sinister way. The wounded came trooping steadily back with wounds in their heads, arms and bodies. Some were on litters. One was carried by his companions. Some were limping along by themselves, presenting a most pitiable spectacle covered with dust, smoke begrimed, haggard, wretched. I don't know yet what are the losses but they must be very heavy, for the fight continued until late at night. The wounded were coming back steadily all the time. Besides these were the poor fellows, too severely wounded to

It was a serious thing for a Military Correspondent to adventure such a prediction while as yet the fighting zeal of the Turks remained unbroken, and in making it I was conscious of the responsibility I incurred to your readers. Since the despatch of my message I have reason to believe that telegrams, giving quite another colour to the course of events, have been transmitted to England, but never in my experience have sensational telegrams availed to alter stern facts. I have to-day visited the Shipka Pass to find my prediction amply verified. All is now quiet there. Radetzky has been left in comparative peace ever since the desperate fighting of Saturday last. So far from his position being impinged on it has been extended. There are no Turks now on his left. The wooded mountain on his right wing, which he cleared of the Turks on the 24th, he had to quit for want of water, and the Turks came back. But now again the Turks have abandoned that position, and solitude reigns among the trees under which furious fighting raged. You may walk along the road from the khan in the rear of Radetzky's position right along to the final peak of the Balkans on Mount St. Nicholas, and thence down into the shelter-trenches, without once hearing the whistle of a bullet, where once the air vibrated with the hum of them.

The truth is that Suleiman Pacha has had enough for the time of the Shipka Pass. For five days he beat out the brains of his gallant stubborn soldiers against its defences and its defenders. Let no man after Shipka venture to assert that the Turkish soldiers are only good men behind earthworks. I respect a fine soldier wherever I find him, be he Greek or Jew, Gentile or Barbarian, and the irrepressible dash and obdurate indomitable valour of the Turkish troops, in assaulting day after day this Shipka position, may claim to rank with any evidence of soldierhood with which I am acquainted. But their valour proved unavailing. Suleiman Pacha has abandoned the attempt, and marched away from the neighbourhood of Shipka. Some say that he is still in Kezanlik; others that he is searching for another pass. My own belief is that he is engaged in trying to re-organize his shattered forces. Five thousand Turkish corpses fester in the blazing sunshine between the Shipka village and the fringes of Mount St. Nicholas. All his Montenegrin soldiers have been removed. There remain still formally confronting the Russians a few battalions of Egyptians, with some cannon on the heights, and a few more miscellaneous battalions in Shipka.

The Imperial and Grand Ducal headquarters were singularly

ought not to be to hem the Turkish armies in defensive positions, but to tempt them to adventure into the open, and then in pitched battles conquer them, in accordance with the invariable precedent. I think, however, that the crisis is virtually past, for let us hope that tinkering tactics have been abandoned. The arrival of reinforcements, now flowing in in a steady stream, should enable the Grand Duke to breathe more freely.

I hold to my conviction that the Shipka is safe, and that thus is defeated the great strategic scheme of the Turkish leaders to hem the Russians within the large *tête de pont* in Bulgaria with the ultimate intent of driving them over the Danube. How narrow was the escape of the Shipka need not be now closely inquired into, nor what would have been the consequences if the Russians had lost their hold of that critically important point. The next few days will be full of interest. These past I shall expect the Russians to take the initiative in a vigorous offensive, not on both flanks and so relieve them

done so, pursue
ir of the Turkish
uke to rely with

greater confidence on the unquestionable excellence of his troops as acting fighting men not alone as mere pieces of palisading and to pursue a bold and vigorous line of action even at some risk. The Balkan passes need not be held by strong garrisons if troops are maintained within easy hail, say at Gabrova to ensure the safety of the Shipka, at Eleno to do the same office by the Hainkoi. The role of invader is vigorous offensive action, not inactive defence. The spirit and condition of the Russian soldiers are high and satisfactory. They may be relied on to fight a good fight. Let them have their innings.

General Dragomiroff has telegraphed to the Emperor that in six weeks he expects to be fit for duty again.

Colonel Wellesley returns to the Imperial headquarters to day.

* GABROVA, August 31st.—This day week I despatched you a telegram describing the long and obdurate fighting in the Shipka Pass up to that date, the 24th instant, and said that the Turks would certainly renew strenuously their effort to attain the object for which Süleiman Pacha had already expended so much blood. I nevertheless was impressed with the conviction that Radetzky firmly held the position. So strong was that conviction, that I thought the circumstance justified me in quitting the scene of action for the purpose of reaching the telegraph base.

The following letter describing the fighting in the Shipka Pass is from the Correspondent with the Turks :—

◀ ADRIANOPLE, *August 26th.*—The Shipka Pass is being most obstinately defended, and, notwithstanding the utmost bravery which Suleiman Pacha's troops have shown, victory as yet has been withheld, although on one occasion it has been almost within his grasp. His bold method of pushing his enemy hard after striking a blow, instead of losing half its value by pausing to recover himself, has brought him at one bound, as it were, to within 500 yards of the Russians. The Balkan road runs through the village of Shipka (now almost burnt to the ground), and creeps along and along the bare mountain, on the summit of which is the chief Russian position. The highest point nearest this, as well as every ridge before reaching it, is thickly entrenched by the Turks, and it will be impossible for an enemy of ten times his strength to attempt to make a descent. The mountains to the right and left, both of which are wooded, and form excellent cover to the attacking parties, have batteries established upon them, altogether numbering sixteen guns; those on the right (three batteries), being of higher elevation, effectually command the Russian side before them, where the Balkan road runs at their feet. The left has not such an advantage, and the ascent from the bottom of the defile is exceedingly precipitous, and almost inaccessible.

On Thursday and Friday last the severest fighting which Suleiman's army has had occurred—the first day's fighting being on the right—and towards the close of the day the Russians were actually forced to beat a retreat, and the Turks gained momentary possession of a trench. By some strange error they were not properly supported, and had in their turn to retire, to the intense mortification of their commander, who, it is said, had fully determined that the battle should be won before the day closed. On Friday a change of tactics occurred, and the firing was entirely on the left, and went briskly on the whole day, without any advantage, however, excepting the loss it has inflicted on the already weakened garrison. Your Correspondent on the other side will doubtless have given you correct information of the numerical strength of the Russians before us. We hear they do not exceed 7,000 men, with twelve or sixteen guns, but these are all heavy Krupps, whilst we have only at present brought up sixteen mountain pieces. Suleiman's army is variously estimated at from 30,000 to 50,000 men—a happy medium may or may not represent the correct figures. Who knows? I doubt if the

Balkan road to the spot in question 4,000 yards off. Two bullock waded in the face of the frantic efforts of the drivers to get on even after the string of wagons at such a pace as few bullocks could have seen. The Russians could hardly have seen to the proximity of the foot of the mountain. It can hardly be charitably be supposed that the troops were massed at the place.

It transpired afterwards that the Turkish troops had met with a check, and had been driven to a position which they had succeeded in holding against the Russians, wishing, no doubt, to gain time, had lost no time in enjoining discipline, threatened to be a panic with the Turkish troops, and awoke to the sense of danger. The Turkish batteries of his heaviest field artillery were ordered to form line across the path of the Russians so as to ensure the Russians a victory. The Turkish troops have had the temerity to advance, and he has since continued to take the measure against any contingency.

The English Societies of the Red Cross have taken themselves in conjunction with one of the Turkish Surgeon-in-Chief of the army, and the place, with a clear stream of water running 100 yards from the nearest Russian battery. The number increases daily, and by an arrangement the Turkish surgeons have taken in the heavier ones and amputated the limbs of the *confrères*. A Turkish officer of rank has been a day or two since, and instant care of the Englishmen in preference. The fact is worth noting, and an instance of the same kind. The Turkish Surgeon-in-Chief and Dr. Sandwith, who are in charge of the service in directing the hospital, are from the numbers passing through whose wounds are dressed in the

general himself could say, in its present condition, with fighting going on vigorously on all sides, and a large extent of country to defend. An army more suited to the task before it, or a general more fitted to the command in mountain warfare, there could not be.

The telegraph will have informed you whether the Muscovite is still master of the Balkans, if not, he will have a hard time of it on the other side, for Osman Pacha is not far distant. As to the poor peasantry, God help them! Those on our side are in a pitiable state, but how much worse must they be if the Turks descend upon them. It must not be supposed that the Russians, even if they lost their position on the stony ridge above referred to, could not hold those adjoining, although at a lower elevation, still, they are regular forts, and will stand a very strong attack. By threatening to cut off their retreat we may—should the first position fall—hear of surrender, but unless the Russian general is extremely unfortunate, he will make a hard fight until ample reinforcements arrive.

The entire Turkish system of care for the wounded is in a most lamentable state, and were it not for the English doctors, the condition of things would be incredible, hundreds of wounded, even as it is, have to shift for themselves, whilst the English ambulance is crowded with the poor soldiers in dreadful suffering, waiting their turn for relief. In the hospital, or rather houses, of Kezanlık, there are at this moment no less than 800 wounded left to the care of two Turkish surgeons.

August 26th—Matters looked rather differently in Suleman's camp on Saturday. A lull in the din of battle had taken place, that hot, drowsy morning, and for a few hours the unwonted silence was almost unbroken, occasional shells only being exchanged as mere matters of courtesy. Just when the general himself, and not a few of his soldiers, were snatching a welcome doze on the plain at the Pass foot, the whirr of a shell aimed near headquarters broke the pleasant stillness. As if to prove there was no mistake about it, another and another fell, but this time aimed apparently directly at a long train of covered bullock waggons toiling slowly across the plain, freighted with the wounded from the left Turkish position, where their losses had been particularly heavy. A white flag with the crescent was carried at the head of this sad procession, but justice must be done to the Russians on this occasion against wilfully firing on it, for the small size of the flag prevented its being easily distinguishable at the distance from which they fired, their batteries on the main

CHAPTER XVII.

THE THIRD ATTACK ON PLEVNA.

Sortie by Osman Pacha in Force—Capture of Loftcha by Imeretinsky and Skobelev—Dispositions for the Attack on Plevna—The Four Days' Cannonade—The Infantry Attack—The Mamelcon Redoubt South-East of Plevna—Gallant Advance of the Russians—Arrival of Turkish Reinforcements—Repulse of the Russians—Turkish Attack on the Radisovo Ridge—Counter Attack by Kriidener and Kriloff and its Repulse—Skobelev's Attack on the Double Redoubt on the Loftcha Road—Capture of the Redoubt—Six Turkish Attacks for its Recovery—The Redoubt Recaptured—Skobelev returning from the Battle—Capture of the Grivica Redoubt by the Roumanians—General Failure of the Third Russian Attack on Plevna.

By the end of the month of August the Russians were looking forward to a new attack on Plevna as an event near at hand. Their preparations, however, were not completed, and on the last day of that month Osman Pacha anticipated the blow by making a sortie in considerable force against the Russian positions. He was repulsed with loss. Four days afterwards the Russians gained an important success by wresting the town of Loftcha from the Turks. The long-expected attack on Plevna was commenced on the 7th of September by a cannonade, and was succeeded on the 11th by the infantry assault by which the Russians hoped to restore the fortunes of the campaign. The following letter gives a summary view of military affairs at the end of August:—

* GORNY STUDEN, *September 1st.*—Following upon his recent short visit to the Imperial headquarters here, Prince Charles of Roumania has been appointed to the chief command of the Russo-Roumanian Army before Plevna. General Zotoff takes the post of second in command. Yesterday Osman Pacha inaugurated the new appointment by assuming the offensive, and directed a serious and well-sustained attack against the Russian left centre, almost directly in front of Poradim.

At six o'clock in the morning a large force of Turkish cavalry advanced beyond the Turkish foreposts between Radisovo and Grivica, and drove in the Russian advanced posts on the line between the villages of Pelisat and Sgalince. This done,

as that of the heaviest and most prolonged of any previous fighting. It commenced at nine o'clock with a sharp rifle fire on the Turkish left, and proved to be a night attack by the Russians on a battery which had been effecting great damage in the trenches on the face of the main Russian centre or rock position. The flash of the Turkish rifles as they met the ascending Russians could be easily distinguished, sparkling through the trees, from the plain, and their vividness and frequency showed only too well how hotly the contest was proceeding. Hour after hour passed thus with varying success, and it was not until six in the morning that silence reigned again, and the news circulated throughout the camp that severe as had been the Russian attempt, it had been resolutely held at bay, and by a greatly inferior numerical force, without the advantage which the Russians had of drawing upon their immediate reserves to an almost unlimited extent. The losses on both sides must have been enormous, for the firing did not cease for one moment in its violence throughout the night. The Turkish loss was heavier, owing to a sad error in the regular troops imagining, in the obscurity of the night, that the dismounted Circassians and Bashi Bazouks were Russians, a mistake natural enough as regards the former, excepting that they are not always to be met with in the front, at least when fighting is going on, in their turn they fired into the regulars also.

It is subject of remark that during the whole night the Turkish batteries on the right did absolutely nothing to help matters by way of diversion as they might easily have done by shelling the Russian batteries in the front and such of their enemy's troops as were within range. The position was held unsupported, and the glory of its defence is alone due to its own scanty battalions, and their slight reserves. With the heavy losses which Suleiman's army has now sustained, and notwithstanding the admirable manner in which they fight, it is somewhat doubtful if any general attack will be made for a few days. The Russians, with their telegraphic communications open from the positions themselves to their main body, can call up as they evidently have already been compelled to do, any amount of reinforcements on the instant, whereas those of the Turks are far behind.

12th Division, which, the Archduke Vladimir reports, drove them out and forced them to retire under the guns of the Rustchuk position.

Commencing on Thursday, and continuing yesterday, there was general fighting along the front of the centre and right flank army of the Czarewitch from Nisova on the White Lom southward over Solenik, Gagovo, Sultankoi, Popkoi, Mehemedkoi, and beyond, in front of Osman Bazar. Here it is believed Mehemet Ali Pacha was personally in command. Great masses of Turks everywhere drove in the Russian forepost line. An important battle is imminent, but the tactics of the Turks resemble those of the combatants in the American civil war. When they gain any ground they sit and fortify themselves in it by entrenchments before moving to acquire any more. There is obvious caution in this policy. The Russians have abandoned the Popkoi position, after having entrenched themselves in it. The reason is stated to be the discovery of its ineligibility as being commanded by higher ground within cannon range. The new position is behind the old one. I have not learned whether the Turks have occupied the Popkoi position. A parlementaire from Mehemet Ali Pacha on the subject of the treatment of the wounded and the Bulgarian civil population has been here. He is singularly incoherent as to the objects of his mission, has no definite proposals to make, and there are suspicions that in reality he is a spy. On some subjects he is charmingly frank. Speaking to him of the Bashi-Bazouks the Grand Duke called them "wild beasts." "Oh," said the envoy, "I am not expected to defend them. I always take an escort myself when I must pass through their camp."

The Emperor presents to Radetzky a sword set with diamonds and inscription engraved upon it, "For the defence of the Shipka Pass."

The new week promises to be bloody. Summer wanes, and decisive results become every day of more importance to the Russians, for there are indications not to be disregarded—financial, political, and social—which point against the probability of the continuance of the war into another campaign.

The following is a fuller account of Osman Pacha's sortie by an eye-witness:—

† PORADIM, *August 31st*.—Another Battle of Plevna has just been fought. The Turks this morning at eight o'clock made a furious attack on the Russian positions here, which resulted in one of the most hardly fought combats of the war.

at eight o'clock the Turkish leader developed a regular attack in force in a direction already prepared by his cavalry. The Turkish infantry engaged were estimated by the Russians at 25,000 men, with more than a proportionate quantity of artillery. The Russian force engaged consisted of three regiments of the 16th Division, which was not engaged in the previous Plevna battle, and two battalions of the 30th Division in reserve, which division took part in the battle of the 30th July. The Uhlans and Hussars of the 4th Cavalry Division arrived in time to be of some service.

The Turkish attack was in some degree a surprise. General Zotoff was away from Poradim, making a formal visit to Prince Charles, and in his absence nobody was in a position to make comprehensive dispositions, but he returned in time to take the direction of affairs before the fighting was over. It was stubborn, and in places desperate. The village of Sgalince, and the hollow near it, the weak point in the Russian defence, four times changed hands, but they are stated to have ultimately remained in possession of the Russians. The Turkish attack then was thus far repulsed, but the previous forepost line of the Russians was not wholly recovered, and the Turks have thus established an indentation on the semicircle of the Russian environment. The Russians state their loss in the day's fighting at 800 killed and wounded, which figures indicate the seriousness of the affair.

To-day the Turks are reported to be remaining quiet. There is every indication that within the next few days the Plevna district will be the scene of momentous events. If Osman Pacha is working on a plan, a strong blow at the Russian centre, such as that delivered yesterday, can have no other result than to precipitate the long postponed crisis. I may mention a curious belief current among the less well informed officers of the Russian army, that Osman Pacha is no other than Marshal Bazaine.

The return of the 2nd Division from the reserve position behind the Shipka to Selvi was very opportune. Yesterday there was lively work on the Russian left flank also. Early in the morning a Turkish force, consisting, according to the Russian reports, of eight battalions of infantry and four squadrons of cavalry, advanced from Rustchuk to the village of Kadikoi, between the Black and White Loms, and the scene of previous fighting detailed in my letters from the Rustchuk army. Kadikoi was occupied only by a Cossack regiment of the 12th Division, which withdrew in the face of superior force, and the Turks occupied it. Later in the day, however, they were attacked by the Ukraine infantry regiment of the

OSMAN PACHA'S ATTACK.

that it would prove to be only a demonstration here on centre, and that we should soon hear of something serious on our right wing. What made an attack here still more improbable was that two days ago it was reported that Osman Pacha had sent 20,000 men from Plevna to Loftcha, either to attack Skobeleff on the Selvi road, or reinforce Suleiman Pacha by way of Trojan. I waited a few minutes to hear whether there were any reports of an attack on either wing, and what report would be made from the front. The report from the front was a long time coming; so long that I grew impatient, and mounting, rode to the left wing, some three miles distant, in order to see for myself what the attack might mean.

As I rode out towards Pelisat I met great crowds of Bulgarian refugees, some of whom had fled from the Turkish advance in front of the Russian lines, others from the village of Pelisat itself, where there would probably be hard fighting in case of a battle. The whole population had put all their movable effects into waggons and carts, with the women and children, and were driving their live stock before them. The country behind the Russian lines everywhere, I may remark, is covered with refugees camped in waggons, and in hastily-constructed straw huts. They retreat with the Russians, and again move forward with them, showing unabated confidence when the Russians make even a slight movement in advance.

In a few minutes I had passed over the level plain between Poradim and Pelisat, a plain planted with Indian corn and vines. The ambulance waggons were already coming back with wounded. The vine hills between Pelisat and Sgalince were covered with clouds of smoke, which rose up in great white flecked balls that rolled off and disappeared in the direction of Plevna, while the deep savage roar of small-arms mingled with the thunder of artillery in a way which showed at if the Turks were making a demonstration it was a very silent one, to say the least of it.

As I went skimming along over the hill that rose to the right of Pelisat was a Russian battery throwing shells that exploded out of sight, right in the direction of the Russian redoubt which I knew was about a mile in front of it. This was a most alarming circumstance. If the guns were shelling their own redoubt it could only be by a fatal mistake, or else because the Turks had taken it, in which case our left wing must have already been driven to Pelisat, and in danger of being turned. But strange as there were very few balls falling here, while the fight

The Turks some time ago made some feeble reconnaissances, which resulted in one or two slight cavalry skirmishes, a most unusual thing for the Turks, and about the time the attack was made on the Shipka they made a demonstration here which kept us on the alert, but which resulted in nothing else. It seemed so certain that the Turks would not attack here, and it was so evident that the Russians were not ready to resume the offensive for some days, perhaps for some weeks, that most of the Correspondents had gone away in despair. I had saddled my horse to follow their example, when about eight o'clock, my ear caught a dull, scarcely audible thumping that sounded more like a horse stamping at flies than the booming of artillery. Artillery it proved to be nevertheless, for in a few minutes it grew louder and clearer, and looking towards the line of low hills in the direction of Plevna some four miles distant, we saw several columns of white smoke rising behind them, showing where the artillery was already hard at work. The indistinctness of the sound was caused by a slight breeze blowing towards Plevna—for the distance from Poriadim to our extreme front is scarcely five miles. Was the attack real or feigned? and would not the real battle take place on our right wing, formed by the Roumanian troops? were the questions which occurred to everybody.

The co operation between the Russians and Roumanians, I may remark is not very good. A few days ago General Zotoff changed the position of the troops of the right wing, which movement left the regiment of the Roumanians quite exposed. He informed the commander of the regiment of this fact requesting him to make a corresponding movement, to which the Roumanian colonel replied that he had no orders to receive from General Zotoff. In like manner the Roumanians, contrary to the wishes of the Russian Commander in Chief insisted upon finding another crossing of the Danube, and have crossed at the mouth of the Isker with two divisions where they are so far away from the Russian army that they are beyond the reach of help from the Russians in case of a sudden attack by the Turks. The Turks have really enough troops to make a demonstration against Zotoff, and at the same time, by a sudden movement, to fall upon the Roumanians at the mouth of the Isker, and drive them into the Danube. General Zotoff could not of course know whether he was threatened with a real or only a feigned attack until it would be too late to help the Roumanians.

When the battle began this morning everybody was of opinion

seemed to grow more terrible towards the centre in the direction of Sgalince

Full of anxiety, I galloped forward to the hill just to the left of Pelisat, which promised a view of what was going on at the front. I found a squadron of dragoons hovering just behind the crest of this hill, and with half a dozen officers on the top watching the progress of events. I was now on the extreme Russian left and as I soon ascertained on the extreme front likewise. In front and beyond Pelisat the ground rose in a lazy incline for a distance of a mile. About the point where the Russian redoubt stood, which was not, however, visible, a mile and a half to the right, was the village of Sgalince the Russian centre, before which was another redoubt, and a series of trenches. Forward towards Plevna the ground still rose higher, so that the Russian positions were and are commanded by the positions taken by the Turks in their forward movement. The disadvantage cannot be avoided by the Russians without falling back several miles. The Russian redoubt a mile in front of Pelisat had been taken by the Turks early in the fight. The Russian left wing had been driven back on Pelisat, in front of which trenches had been dug and lined with troops.

The battle began to look like a serious one indeed. It had been raging more than an hour since we heard the first gun fired, and in that time the redoubt had been taken by the Turks, retaken by the Russians and retaken again by the Turks. This accounted for the strange firing of the battery in the centre in the direction of Sgalince to the right of Pelisat, which was still blazing away, sending its shells screaming along the ground as they rose with the hill before us and exploded beyond.

I had not been at my new standpoint more than five minutes, when the crest of the hill a mile in front, suddenly grew black as with a line of ink drawn across the sky. What was it? We applied our glasses and soon made it out to be the enemy who had just crowned the hill after taking the redoubt behind, and was now preparing for an assault on the Russian centre. Their presence there showed that the redoubt must have been again captured by the Turks though for a minute we could not make out whether they were infantry or cavalry. In less than a minute they began to descend the hill right in our direction, as though determined to drive our left out of Pelisat, and turn it. The battery to the right of the village now limbered up and retreated back on the plain about a quarter of a mile, and again took up position. My own position, with a handful of cavalry behind the hill, now

soldiers returned the greeting of the general they cheered lustily. In that cheer lingered no undertone of the sentiment conveyed in the greeting of the Roman gladiators. Battery after battery passed onward, the rattle of the wheels muffled by the grassy carpet. Slowly and with infinite labour the ox-trains lumbered forward, drawing the big siege-guns and their ammunition on the way to the prepared position whence to-morrow the huge projectiles will whistle into the Grivica redoubt. The hospital waggons, empty now, were pouring forward by the score. To-morrow night will see them full enough, for, to quote King Henry of Navarre, "Never saw I promise yet of such a bloody fray."

The following is an enumeration of the troops on the ground, with my estimate of their strength:—The 9th Corps, Baron Krüdener, comprising the 5th and 31st Divisions, 18,000 men. The 4th Corps, General Kriloff, containing the 16th and 30th Divisions, 20,000 men. One Brigade of the 2nd Division, Prince Imeretinsky, 6,000 men. One Brigade of the 3rd Division, 6,000 men. One Rifle Brigade, 3,000 men. The 1st Roumanian Division, Colonel George Angelescu, 14,000 men. The 2nd Roumanian Division, 14,000 men, Colonel Alexander Angelescu. In all say 80,000 infantry. The following are the cavalry details:—The 4th Cavalry Division, 2,000 sabres. The 9th Cavalry Division, 2,000. One Brigade of the 11th Cavalry Division, 1,000. One Brigade of Circassian Cossacks, 1,000. A portion of the Imperial escort, 200. The 1st Roumanian Division, 2,000; the 2nd Roumanian Division, 2,000. Total of cavalry, say 10,000. In all a compact and well-equipped army of about 90,000 men, with 250 field guns and 20 siege guns of 15 centimetre, an army the greater part of which had already been under fire, although this circumstance goes for but little with Russian soldiers. The Roumanians have not previously been seriously engaged, but are in fine condition and good heart, and seasoned by long camping and marching. The general in command of them under Prince Charles is General Cernat, previously War Minister, an officer with a high reputation for organization.

The arrangements for to-morrow do not appear of a complicated character. There has been a talk of elaborate strategy and of turning movements, passing both north and south of Plevna and falling on the rear of Osman Pacha. Some indication of a turning movement was suggested when Prince Imeretinsky took Loftcha, but the suggestion was deceptive. The course of attack promises to be almost identical with that pursued on the previous occasion. I have explained, I fear *usque ad nauseam*, that the Turkish positions were roughly

engaged, and their strength may be reckoned at about 22,000 men. The Turks cannot be estimated at more than 7,000. Skobeleff on the previous evening marched from Kakrind, his previous defensive position and carried a position on the north east of Loftcha, which rendered the place virtually untenable. In the night, therefore, the Turks fell back on the fortified range of heights, behind the town, and there awaited the attack. This was begun with artillery at sunrise, and the Russian advance was so conducted that their artillery, passing south of Loftcha, took up a position enfilading the range of heights held by the Turks, and also cut off their retreat into the Balkans over the Trojan. Nevertheless the Turks resisted stubbornly, and were only driven out by hard infantry fighting which lasted till near sundown.

The Russians underwent several repulses before they were finally successful. The Turks tried to retire upon Plevna, but Skobeleff's Cossack horse artillery stopped the way, and they went away due west pursued by Skobeleff's Cossacks and part of the Imperial escort.

The following letter was written on the evening before the commencement of the third attack on Plevna —

POPADIM, *September 6th* — Leaving Gorny Studen yesterday morning, the headquarters of the Grand Duke went on to the village of Radenica, a few kilometres behind this place where they now remain. Coming on to Popadim I found here Prince Charles of Roumania in chief command of the whole Army of Plevna with his staff and escort. Here also was General Zotoff, who has the nominal position of chief of staff to the Prince. To day Prince Charles paid a lengthened visit to the Grand Duke Nicholas, and the final arrangements were perfected. To morrow morning at dawn of day a momentous battle will commence, but it will last more than one day. Riding out this afternoon in the direction of Bogot, I found the troops advancing everywhere. The mistake of the last battle will not be committed of having troops half exhausted by a long march before attaining striking distance. The whole force except the reserves to night bivouac close up to the forepost line. The scene was singularly impressive. Here a long column of cavalry, with dancing pennons, wound up the gentle green slope of the downs. Here a whole regiment stood in dense black square waiting for the command to march. Here another deployed into line swept briskly forward, with bayonets flashing in the sunshine. As the

Of the details of his dispositions I am unaware, except that he touches General Kriloff near Bogot, and that his force is *à cheval* of the Chaussée, and constitutes the Russians' extreme left flank, which is very strong either for direct attack or for outflanking the Turkish position.

* NEAR RADISOVO, *September 7th*.—General Zotoff left Poradim last night, and spent the night in personally seeing to the disposition of the troops, returning no more to Poradim.

From no point is it possible to witness the whole of a battle extending over so wide an extent of front, and it remains for a Correspondent to choose the locality he considers likely to be most interesting. General Zotoff overnight had named to me as a rendezvous-place for the morning the heights between Sgalince and Pelisat, and thither, in the first instance, setting forward while it was yet dark, I directed my way. The morning was cold, but fine, with no clammy drizzle as on the morning of the previous battle. There was a weird impressiveness in the period of waiting up there among the long grass, watching the east for the light wherewithal to begin the fell game of battle. There had been a sharp frost during the night, and as the sun began to rise the whole surface of the earth was covered with a dense frost fog, which hung until dispelled by the sun's rays. About Pelisat I found the light brigade of the 4th Cavalry Division standing in reserve, along with a regiment of the Roumanian infantry and some Roumanian militia. I followed the road from Pelisat to Plevna in the direction of Radisovo along the high ground which had constituted the line of Schahofskoy's advance. We were on a broad saddle with undulations on either side of us. On the road we passed several battalions of the 30th and 5th Divisions, who had been working all night making battery emplacements for big guns, and were now going back towards Pelisat to constitute the reserve. We found ourselves just in the rear of the line of our batteries. On the slopes on our right were twelve of the big guns. On the slope on the other side were eight more, singularly close to the village of Grivica. In position in front of the great guns were the field batteries. The two on the right fired against the Grivica redoubt above the village. Three more were blazing away at what, in my narrative of the previous battle, I called the first Turkish position on the lower central ridge in front of Plevna.

The firing began about half-past six, it being now eight. There was no artillery firing apparent elsewhere than from the batteries whose position I have described. In the hollows in

in the form of a horseshoe, the convexity pointing toward the east, and the town of Plevna standing about the centre of the base. The Russians have left the base open to the east, and to-morrow they will be obliged to fight straight to their own front. Grivica stands in the toe of the horseshoe, and opposite the horseshoe is the Russo Roumanian centre, in the rear of which is the place where I now write.

Here are fixed for the day the army headquarters and here Prince Charles will probably be joined by the Grand Duke Nicholas with his staff. The Russians have the ground to the left, the ground of Schahofskoy in the previous battle. The Roumanians have the section of the environment to the right of the centre, being the ground on which Krudener fought so stubbornly, although ineffectually, on the 30th of July. The front of each section is of about equal extent. The Turkish positions opposite the Roumanian section are the stronger both by nature and art. But there are but 28,000 Roumanians to 50,000 Russians. It seems logically to follow that the function of the Roumanians is intended to be chiefly of a demonstrative character. They will doubtless assail the Turkish positions opposite to them and take advantage of opportunities should such offer. But they will do good service if they, to use a technical term, "hold" the Turks confronting them while the centre and left are delivering blow upon blow on the weaker sections of the Turkish front opposite them.

It cannot, indeed, be said that Grivica is a weak point, but it

preparation. The line is prolonged toward the left flank by the 31st Division. On the downs above Sgalnee and Pelisat, where General Krudener, commanding the 9th Corps, made up by the two divisions just named, will have his headquarters, the alignment is yet further prolonged by the 30th Division and the 16th Division, reaching from the touch of the 31st Division to Bogot, where the 16th Division is chiefly massed, and where General Kriloff, commanding the 4th Corps, will have his headquarters. Prince Imeretinsky, from Loftcha, has detached one brigade south to Trojan to guard against trouble from that region, and to-day has marched north along the chaussée in the direction of Plevna with three brigades, viz., one brigade of the 2nd Division, one brigade of the 3rd Division, and the Tirulleur Brigade.

a reconnaissance along the Loftcha-Plevna chaussée, and was on the way back to make a report. Prince Imeretinsky, fresh from his victory at Loftcha, was here above Botok, and his regiments were tramping down the slope, steadily up the hill, and down the slope again, on their way over Tucenica towards the ridge about Radisovo. After a brief halt we followed the great column, a curious mixture of regiments of the 2nd Division, the 11th Division, and even the 12th Division, and followed on to the height behind Radisovo, the spot where Schahofskoy delayed awhile to enable Krüdener to come up in co-operation.

The battle had as yet hung fire, but now it was certainly warming. Our cannon, great and small, on the Russian right flank, where we had been in the morning, were firing furiously, whether still against Grivica or not we could not as yet tell. Another battery on the left of us, above Radisovo, was shelling what was called the Turkish first position. The well-remembered scene lay stretched before me. The village of Radisovo at my feet, where the wounded died at the hands of the Bashi-Bazouks, the ridge above so swept erstwhile by the Turkish shells that I had to dismount, with now once again its slope occupied by masses of Russian infantry, the white smoke hanging in the valley and on the low central ridge behind, the further ridge crowned with the Turkish camps, the towers of Plevna down among the green trees in the valley behind the town where the Russian dead lay so thickly. It was much the old thing. We were working round on our left flank, but there was that indomitable Grivica redoubt blazing away as hard as ever.

There seemed no hurry. We sat down contentedly on the slope above the village and looked down into the place so peaceful-seeming there with its low roofs amid' the setting of greenery. How history repeats itself! Here again are the shells crashing into Radisovo or exploding against the slope on which we rest. Here again are Russian infantry men lying down on the reverse slope beyond Radisovo, waiting for the word to cross the crest and sally down into that valley already littered with so many Russian dead. Here again are the Russian guns on that crest belching their thunder against the Turkish positions. Still through all this turmoil, as through the last, the white towers and sparkling roofs of Plevna smile serenely in the sunshine.

We lie here hour after hour and watch the scene. It is impossible to tell the progress of the fight, for it makes no progress. Still hour after hour the batteries which first opened in the morning blaze away. The batteries on the crest above

front, behind, and on the flanks of the batteries, were stowed away the infantry of the 5th and 31st Divisions, constituting the 9th Corps. Radisovo on our left front held by the Turks yesterday, was reported evacuated overnight by them, and we had batteries, not indeed quite on the height before it, where in the previous battles Schahofskoy's cannon stood and fired so long, but on the slope to the right of it, almost in a line with, but retired from the height I have named. The firing waxes and wanes. A few of the siege guns on the right which can get sight of the towers of Plevna down the long hollow are pitching shells in that direction and the field guns fire in gusts and then are almost still. The indomitable Grivica redoubt now fires, now is still with an almost comical nonchalance. Now and then a man is wounded in the batteries in our immediate front but as yet the work is child's play, and the work of the day can hardly be said to have begun.

Affairs not progressing rapidly here, we rode away due south across the fields behind the Radisovo hills and valley to Tucenica. Mounting the slope beyond we looked back north west toward the reserve on the slope of the height behind Radisovo and observed there a large mass of infantry and artillery belonging to the Turkish division, while above them on the ridge a battery was in action. Radisovo itself we could not see because it stands imbedded in a curious fold of the valley. Whether it was held by the Turks or not we could not tell. We saw a few horsemen moving about, but whether Russian or Turkish patrols it was impossible to see on this slope. No mass of troops was visible, nor any artillery. A column of infantry and artillery was marching through Tucenica on the southward to Bogot and this we followed, although it took us somewhat further away from Plevna, because by going towards Bogot it would be possible to learn what, if anything, was doing on our left flank. So far as regards the right opposite Grivica there was as yet nothing save artillery fire. On the plateau above Bogot troops stood ready to march. They were in battle array, and although their uniforms were sombre, still they made an imposing show. As we came up the slope by Bogot we passed a battalion of the 9th Division, an isolated battalion, marching down toward Tucenica, followed by a sotnia of wild looking Kulanaki Cossacks.

Putting our horses to feed in a deserted farmyard, we moved up through the massed troops, horse, foot and artillery, toward where the staff of General Zotoff stood on the hilltop. As we tramped Slobieff dashed past us at the head of a sotnia of Circassian Cossacks with whom he had been making

The Russian siege battery firing into the Grivica Redoubt made admirable practice: shell after shell, as I sat watching through my glass, burst in the parapet or went slap into the redoubt. Every now and then the guns were silent for ten minutes or so at a time, and sanguine people began to think that the stubborn defence had been abandoned, and that the defenders had departed bag and baggage. But when the Turk is in a place and means to stop there, he is a difficult customer to dislodge. The pause had been but a short interval to repair damages, and presently the Grivica gun-fire would recommence in its old jaunty fashion. It is not the key to the position, but its reduction would be a valuable gain; and instead of spreading their fire as they have done, the Russians should have concentrated upon it the whole weight of their bombardment, and made it untenable by dint of a hailstorm of shells. As it is they may bombard it for a week, sacrifice a brigade of infantry, and then after all not succeed in taking it. The assault was intended to have been begun yesterday afternoon at five, but the Russian clock is always more or less slow, and it came to pass that, owing to late starting and delays by the way, the troops were not quite all in position by the appointed time, and so the attack was postponed. Everywhere now the infantry are in position waiting for the word.

The scene from my commanding elevation is singularly interesting. Behind every swell, in the hollow of every depression, lying down behind the screen of Indian corn, are soldiers, some far away out beyond the batteries, and the Russian shells and Turkish shells whistle over their heads without disturbing them. Others are snugly stowed to the right and left of the batteries, lying on the reverse slopes so as to be clear of the hostile shells. All round the edge of the horizon, from the River Vid on the north, to the Loftcha-Plevna road on the south, rises up against the pale blue sky the white smoke of the cannon-fire. The Turkish horseshoe is girdled by a cincture of cannon-fire and armed men; but the Turk hardens his heart and gives back shell for shell, as in the impending fight he will return cheer for cheer, rifle-shot for rifle-shot, and bayonet-stab for bayonet-stab.

It is a curiously lazy moment for a Correspondent. After he has written down dry facts he has little to record. A regiment rises out of one hollow and marches through the tall Indian corn to another hollow, which is thought a better place. The villagers of Grivica down there in the hollow between the batteries, with shells interminably whistling over their heads, are actually engaged treading out their barley, on the primi-

Radisovo fire steadily if less swiftly. The battery on our left hand more slowly still. The Turkish shells burst with great clouds of smoke and dust on the crest on the reverse slope and village of Radisovo. The Grivica redoubt holds its own with its fire. Nowhere does the Turkish artillery seem in the least degree dominated. The village of Radisovo is blazing at our feet. It has at length caught fire after so many hair-breadth escapes. The sun sinks, and the situation remains unaltered. Scarcely a rifle has been fired to-day, all the work done has been with artillery, and the Russian loss is a mere handful. Probably the Turkish is not much greater. In every material sense Plevna is as far off being taken as ever. The Russians are taking two bites at a cherry. Will they do it at two?

* *BEFORE PLEVNA, September 8th* — When the fighting, or rather cannonade, recommenced this morning, it was not easy at first sight to recognize that the Russians had gained any advantage by their profuse powder-burning of the day before. Last night the parapet of the Grivica redoubt had seemed a good deal jagged by the Russian shell fire, but, under cover of night, all its defects had been made good, and it looked as trim as if never a shot had been fired at it. But the Russians had been at work also during the night. They had gained a position of Grivica, that is, their batteries were now forward in the fortunate position where the old forts had been built and armed on an elevation comparatively close to and overhanging Grivica village, and within easy battery range of the irrepressible redoubt.

As soon as the sun rose that battery came into action against the redoubt, supported by isolated big guns. Away to the right, and further to the rear on the left in rear of the advanced battery, the original battery of siege guns sent its fire sweeping down the valley and over traversing undulations into what in the previous battle was called the Turkish first position, the redoubt and entrenched village in the central swell. This position was also receiving the fire of two or three batteries of field guns stationed on the heights beyond Radisovo, the height where Schahofskoy's cannon stood so long. The redoubt could not reply to the siege battery, the range of the latter being too long, so it accepted punishment from that quarter, and pounded away in reply to the field batteries on the ridge. The practice was not good. I don't fancy there were ten casualties on that ridge throughout the day.

slope into the shell-fire. The theatre of the defence, and a large portion of the offence, the whole, indeed, of its right and centre, lie displayed before me. Directly opposite me is the Grivica Redoubt. Almost directly to the left of me is Plevna. Almost directly on the right is the Russian great battery. On my left front there are the Turkish positions—the main positions in fact before Plevna—those positions assailed by Schahofskoy on the 30th July. Their guns by this time are in full action, for the plot thickens towards noon. The Russian infantry has been pushed forward in skirmishing order, a tirailleur leading them, and the Archangel and Uglaskosky regiments following through the maize fields on the centre swell, driving back the outlying Turks. The artillery follow them, and come into action at short range against a Turkish redoubt. The Russians have now three lines of fire—the first, the field guns down in the maize; the second, also field guns, on the lower undulation behind at medium range; and the great cannon behind. The Turkish return fire, chiefly directed at the Russian first line of artillery, is very heavy. The ground is ploughed in all directions with their shells. Hardly any harm is done. The infantry lie quiet in the hollows along the fields; the gunners take their chance among the maize, and the enemy's shells mostly fly over them. Indeed, it is open to doubt whether the aim of the Turkish fire be not partly to search the reverse slopes.

For an hour and more there was very little change in the aspect of affairs hereabouts, so I moved still farther to our left to the crest of the range beyond and above Radisovo, where Schahofskoy's cannon stood so long. When I first arrived the crest was one array of field batteries, and the firing was very heavy, the Turkish shells doing great damage among the gunners, and falling behind among the infantry on the reverse slopes, and in Radisovo. But between two and three o'clock the guns advanced from the crest down the slope towards the Turkish positions, and continued to fire somewhat slackly at this shortened range. The fire of the guns on the left of this range of batteries must have reached into Plevna, and the reply came not alone from the Turkish batteries of the outer redoubts, but also from the cannon on the flanks of the town.

This despatch leaves the field at five o'clock. There are no indications of the assault to-day, and I believe it will not be commenced till to-morrow afternoon, although a redoubt may be earlier assaulted. The cincture of Russian cannon is drawing close round the Turkish positions; but the test will be not with cannon, but with prowess of men with arms in their hands. The Emperor, Prince Charles, and the Grand Duke

tive threshing floor of hardened mud, the men shaking the straw, the women driving the ponies in the endless round. Stoicism or fatalism or indifference, or despair, which are we to call it? Old Baron Krudener, with his staff about him, looks down on the scene from behind the battery overhanging Grivica. The veteran has slept upon the field, and there is a look on his face that would indicate that he is no longer the victim of peremptory commands to do what his personal judgment condemns.

Some Roumanian guns are firing steadily into the Grivica Redoubt from the position at the corner of the wood on Krudener's right, but it is a long range, and the shells are falling short of the redoubt on to the slope more to the left instead. Going down into a little valley and ascending then a little hill we find ourselves in the rear of the Russian great battery of the right flank, a battery containing twelve siege guns. The emplacement in which these are lodged is rough enough, but strong. The guns are fired en barbette. The battery has the valley ad fortified centre face

with three guns looks toward a Turkish redoubt behind the Grivica Redoubt, and connecting it with the great Plitzitz position on the due north flank of Plevna. The right face, armed with three guns, looks across at the Grivica Redoubt itself.

There are those among the spectators who think that Osman Pacha has virtually evacuated the position and has left to hold it only a few thousand men with guns of position. To my thinking this view is utterly fallacious. The Turks are to day developing a wider range of artillery fire than they did on that dreadful day when Schahofskoy and Krudener in vain dashed against their positions. The Turks are adepts in marking time. They fire no harder than they find necessary. They are firing now steadily and deliberately in reply to a fire which to all appearance, is not materially injuring them. If needful they could, I think, fire harder. Let the word be given to attack with infantry, and I venture to predict for the attacking Russians a mighty warm reception.

I note the Turkish camps on their most northerly ridge full of men all the way back from the Grivica Redoubt to the Plitzitz scarp height. On the central swell, I can see masses of their infantry men lying in the hollows, having turned out for the sake of safety from the shell scourged redoubts. Leaving the great battery I ride round more to the left and more forward, coming over the level and descending a little way down the

on the right flank front of the redoubt constituting the first Turkish position, and, looking across the valley, once strewn with Russian corpses, can see with a glass the Turkish gunners going coolly about their work amid the bursting of shells. Plevna lies on our left front. There comes now no Turkish fire on to the ridge where we stand, hot place as it was yesterday. The Russians have infantry massed on its reverse slope, waiting for the attack. They keep their guns silent just here, although the batteries on the same ridge to the right and left give and take.

Surveying the scene leisurely, I can discern how much stronger than at the time of the last battle Plevna is now. On the south and south-west of the town are several wholly new redoubts. There is one very large one on a detached knoll due south of the town, and on the long wooded ridge stretching up from it towards the Vid there is quite a chain of redoubts linked together by a covered way, and making a good line of Turkish cover on their right flank, and indeed partly in their rear as far as the river Vid. It was against the farthest of these redoubts that General Skobelev went last night. Through the glass I can see little knots of Russian soldiers among the trees, and a few Turkish soldiers out on the stubble behind the works. These new redoubts command also the Loftcha-Selvi road, and they cover the side road coming into Plevna from out of the valley of the Vid, which otherwise might be utilized in a turning movement. On this southern face of which I speak are three strong redoubts connected by a covered way, with battery emplacements at intervals and rows of shelter-trenches. In front, on the central swell, I discern eight separate redoubts, besides a line of defence on the downs immediately covering the town of Plevna, and this is wholly exclusive of the great northern ridge. Its summit and slopes are one great entrenched camp, studded with redoubts and battery emplacements. The longer one looks at the place the more thoroughly does one come to feel the toughness of the work taken in hand by the Russians. The position must be attacked as a whole and taken as a whole. Granted that the northern ridge is taken and occupied in its integrity, the position of the central swell is not materially impaired. Suppose a lodgment effected on the central swell, that lodgment would be commanded by the northern ridge and the redoubts on the south of the town. All that is wanted to make the Turkish position virtually impregnable was the occupation and fortification of the ridge in front of Radisovo, that ridge on the exposed crest of which I am now writing. Probably this was not undertaken owing

up the slope towards the redoubt, firing as they advanced. They got up pretty close, and were not without hopes of entering the redoubt without much opposition. The impression had prevailed that the Turks were evacuating the redoubt, and the officers thought that they had seen the Turkish guns going back from out of the redoubt towards the entrenched camp. A Cossack officer with nine men left the advancing skirmishers, and pushed on towards the glacis. They got within a hundred yards of the foot of it, but then there confronted them a row of Turkish rifle muzzles, and a row of Turkish heads above the crest of the shelter-trench, a little way in front of the outward slope of the parapet of the redoubt. The Cossack did not, under these circumstances, think it advisable to persevere, and retired on his supports, who remained where they were until nightfall, exchanging a desultory fire with the Turkish skirmishers in the shelter-trench. During the night there were several outbursts of infantry fire, but none of importance.

This morning, the field guns in the valley against the Turkish first position in the central swell are moved somewhat farther forward, and the field guns which were yesterday on the heights in front of Radisovo, have given up that position to the siege guns, and have themselves moved forward down the slope, where they are now in action against the southern flank of the Turkish first position at a very short range; but the cannonade languishes. The time would seem to have come for delivering the assault, if it ever is to be delivered; but I understand that once again there is a postponement. The Turks are to have another day of shell-fire, and then tomorrow, reckoned as an auspicious day, as it is the Emperor's name-day, the great effort with the infantry is to be made. It may be worth noting that the bombardment began on the anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. It is a dull day. We look, for instance, to vary the monotony, to Prince Tcherkasky, who has abandoned for a time the reorganization of Bulgaria. He is riding about the field at the head of a train of ambulance waggons, anxious to discover the best place at which to station them. Yesterday I advised him to go to Imeretinsky, on our left flank, and there he found a harvest. To-day I ventured to suggest to him that he will do well to place his vehicles on the heights behind Radisovo, as one of Krüdener's divisions will there be in his front under fire. He rides on in the direction indicated, unmindful that that part of the road he must traverse is swept by the Turkish shell-fire.

It was very monotonous here, and I ventured once more on the

to a conviction that the force available was not strong enough to hold so wide an area.

Where is the Turkish force, be it great or small? I sweep the scene with my glass, and the only living things visible are the gunners on the slopes under the entrenched camps. But there are no moving figures around them, no soldier treads the brown sward between the redoubts, and yet it is said that in the entrenched camps on the northern ridge alone are quite 30 000 Turks, and I venture to aver that let the Russian infantry advance and very soon from the edge of the shelter trenches and redoubts would burst out white jets of musketry fire. Toward the afternoon the cannon firing has been much heavier than in the early part of the day. There has been some forepost skirmishing fire. The field guns were within 800 paces of the Turkish redoubts, which as night fell offered great temptation to the Turkish infantry. In the afternoon a battery was constructed on the height above Radisovo. This battery will be armed in the night with six or eight siege cannon from the great battery, and the fire of these will fall at a short range on the first Turkish position. All . . . for the assault to morrow.

Radisovo height with the 31st Division, to be closer for the assault upon the Turkish first position. Everything portends for to morrow a bloody day.

- * BEFORE PLEVNA, September 10th.—Still this long drawn out artillery duel continues, and it is still doubtful whether the assault will be made to day. In my telegram yesterday I mentioned a movement forward to the height before Radisovo of a portion of the siege guns of the Russian great battery, and of three regiments of the 31st Division. There was no cessation of cannon fire until after nightfall, but after my message left the field occurred several interesting episodes. The Grand Duke, with Prince Charles and General Zotoff, came forward into the line of the batteries on and upon either side of the prolongation of the ridge on which stands the Grivica Redoubt in order to watch the effect of the infantry fire against the Turkish gunners working the cannon of the redoubt. Already indeed the Roumanian infantry had occupied a species of natural shelter trench in front of their advanced battery, and had been doing their best to pick off the Turkish gunners, but much effect had not been apparent. A couple of companies of Russian infantry, just as the sun was sinking, quitted some brushwood about half up the slope between the village of Grivica and the redoubt. They had lain in this brushwood all day. They advanced in skirmishing order

Plevna resembles a siege more than anything else. So far there does not seem to have been a single shot exchanged by the infantry. After a hard day's work yesterday the big battery of twelve siege guns opened fire this morning at day-break, and has been pounding away ever since until now, twelve o'clock. I observe a considerable escape of gas from the heavy steel guns of 13 centimètres calibre, of which there are four. Behind this battery is an observatory, consisting of a ladder about 60 feet high, sustained by ropes, on the top of which is generally a soldier with a field-glass, watching the result of the firing. The position of this man when a shell comes along, as it does every now and then, threatening to cut the ladder in two and bring him down with a rush, must be very disagreeable.

The Roumanian batteries away to the right can be heard pounding away on their side, and from our position in the big batteries smoke can be seen to the left overlooking Radisovo, where the Russian guns are blazing away in exactly the same position they were in yesterday; and although yesterday evening the necessity of advancing the batteries nearer the Turkish positions was admitted on all hands, we found this morning on looking at the position that nothing of the kind had been done. The fire of the Turkish redoubt of Grivica does not seem to have slackened in the least, in spite of the number of shells thrown into it yesterday; and although we can see the earth flying into the air in the middle of the redoubt, and now and then pieces of the parapet are carried away, the Turkish guns reply to the Russian as regularly as clockwork. Whatever loss may have been inflicted upon them in men, certainly we do not seem to have succeeded in dismounting any of their guns. It is very probable that the Turks have not many men in the redoubt, but they are hidden in the trenches and low places in the ground outside, and beyond that, a few only are kept in the redoubt for the management of the guns, who as fast as they are killed are replaced by others. Were it otherwise, if the Turks kept the redoubt full of men, the loss would be terrible, for an enormous number of shells have been thrown into it by the Russians and Roumanians.

Part of the guns of the big battery are fired upon this redoubt, part on the entrenched camp away to the left of the redoubt overlooking Plevna, and part on the Turkish batteries in the hollow between Grivica and Plevna. The fire of these batteries is less steady, more irregular, and not so well sustained as yesterday. It is probable that some of the guns have been dismounted. The firing, nevertheless, is still kept up. I

height in front of Radisovo, although, owing to the removal thither of some siege guns the return fire from the Turks made that position far from an elysium of safety. I found on the reserve slope three of Krudener's regiments, on the crest itself, the General of Artillery, with his staff, sitting down to save exposure. On our left, nearer Plevna, was the siege battery, sending shells right over the Turkish central swell into the entrenched camp on the northern ridge, while at our feet, on the slope, and also in front of the Turkish first position on the central swell, the Russian field guns were firing at the redoubt. The Artillery General told me that in it there had been four guns yesterday which had been dismounted, and that during the night four more had been brought up into it, which were now replying. They were making sad and slow work of it in the midst of the hurricane of shells poured into the redoubt, and every now and then many minutes elapsed when the fire therefrom was altogether silent and when it seemed that the redoubt had been silenced. But the Turk dies hard, and ever after a pause came back a shell or two. The central ridge was being heavily bombarded by the Russian field batteries to the left of the great gun battery, and was answering with spirit aided by the guns in the redoubt. Due south of Plevna the Russian batteries on the ridge were also firing at the church of Plevna, which had been converted into a powder magazine. From this summit it was clear that the Russian fire was gradually beating down the fire of the Turks. The Roumanians on the right flank had worked very far round so as to reach behind Rahovo, and the cannon of their right attack were now shelling the Turkish entrenched camp on the northern ridge, which the siege guns
thundering
have got
redoubt the evening before last. The day wore away with no further incident.

To night the Emperor and the Grand Duke sleep in Poradin, so as to be near at hand for to-morrow's work. If nothing unforeseen occurs, the assault will be made ere to-morrow's sun sets. It is time Plevna was over and done with, for the Czarewitch has been compelled to fall back from the line of the Lom. To night it rains and thunders.

The following letter, describing Skobeleff's attack upon the Turkish redoubt, is from another Correspondent —

† BEFORE PLEVNA, *Saturday, September 8th* — This attack upon

could distinguish two redoubts on the other side of the Loftcha road, from which rose two columns of smoke. Behind and above these redoubts were high wooded mountains extending round towards the right. On the other side of this valley is a ridge beginning behind Plevna, and extending to the right as far as Grivica. It is on this ridge that the principal Turkish defences are built—two entrenched camps and two or three redoubts, the last of which, behind Grivica, is the one against which Krüdener's forces were broken, and against which the Roumanian batteries, and part of the heavy siege batteries, are now playing. From the hills all around rose columns and columns of white smoke, and there was not an instant when these hills were not echoing with the thunder of a hundred and fifty guns, Turkish and Russian, that were roaring at each other.

Then again on our left, on a ridge this side of the Loftcha road, at a distance of a mile and a half or two miles, was another Russian battery pounding away at some invisible foe on the other side. The sun is hot, and a veil of smoke hangs over hill, valley, and mountain, which often makes it difficult to distinguish with certainty anything but a sudden flash of fire and a huge ball of white smoke that rises from each discharge of the line described by the Russian and Roumanian positions round Plevna, which begins opposite Bukova, extending nearly parallel with the Sistova road until beyond Grivica, then curving round past Radisovo until within two miles of Plevna, nearly on the Loftcha road, then extending along the Loftcha road on the ridge as far as opposite Krishine. The line thus described is exactly in the form of a reaping-hook, with the point opposite Bukova, the middle of the curve opposite Grivica, the junction of the handle close into Plevna, and the end of the handle at Krishine. The point nearest Plevna, it will be perceived, is near the Loftcha road, at the junction of the handle with the blade.

We had not been in our position under the trees more than ten minutes when we were evidently perceived by a look-out in one of the Turkish redoubts below Radisovo, and probably believing that the Indian cornfield by the side of us, interspersed here and there with trees, was very likely filled with troops, they began to shell us. After they had thrown three shells, all of which fell within twenty yards of us, and the last considerably nearer, we thought it was time to decamp, and withdrew behind the ridge, where a considerable number of soldiers were lying. We finished our lunch under the shade of another tree in a less advantageous position for sight-seeing, and when I again mounted the top of the ridge I was

I do not believe much in the effect of this artillery were there to be mounted altogether four hundred guns upon the Turkish positions, but, so far, not more than a hundred or a hundred and twenty seem to have been brought into position, and, as far as may be judged, the effect at the present moment has been very slight. They are not so close to come to much closer quarters than at present, and the effect of the artillery fire can be made to tell.

Russian right and centre the attack maintains its force of a siege, such is not the case on the left, where Zottoff has ordered an advance. Leaving the big battery about noon, which was slowly pounding away with big hammer blows on the Grivica redoubt and the batteries, I rode along the line to the left, passing the whole series of batteries, from the centre past the middle, almost to the Loftcha road. We found a battery at Radisovo, throwing shells into one of the Turkish positions in front of the town. No embankments had been raised up here, but the guns simply placed in line along the hill, were worked very rapidly, and I observed that there was no escape of gas from the breeches of these guns. The battery was behind, and to the left of Radisovo, on the hill which runs parallel to the little hollow which goes down from Plevna from Grivica. In front of Radisovo is a ridge running parallel to this, and on this ridge was another Russian battery, while the side opposite to the town was covered with infantry lying behind cover on the hill. This battery was also pouring a well sustained fire into the lower Turkish redoubts before Plevna.

I behind the battery, proceeded farther to the left, the hillside was covered with cornfields, vineyards, and a number of trees, threw ourselves down under the shade of the trees to lunch with the aid of some delicious grapes, and watch the battle from this point. Plevna was visible, and we could have been little more than two miles distant from it. And far down before us, distant about a mile, was a line of troops still lying under cover of the hill, apparently waiting for the moment to begin the attack. The troops could not have been more than a mile from the town, and from our standpoint seemed not more than two or three hundred yards from the town.

From here is exceedingly fine. Down in what is a narrow valley or gorge, we could perceive the town of Plevna, with its masses of green foliage, from which rose slender spires of two or three minarets. On the hill behind Plevna, some distance above the town, we

the infantry arriving in line and beginning the attack. The Turks were posted in the trees at the foot of this mountain, and probably half a mile in front of the redoubt, and replied to the Russian fire with vigour. The Russians gradually advanced down the side of the mountain through the trees, driving back the Turks, part of whom seemed to retire upon Plevna, but the greater part upon the redoubt. The Russians pushed down to almost the bottom of the hill, and we saw the Turks retreating up the smooth slope leading towards the redoubt by hundreds, and from the redoubt itself began to be poured forth a heavy fire upon the Russians on the opposite slope. The Russians pushed down steadily nevertheless in loose order, firing as they came; but as they neared the foot of the slope the Turkish fire became terrible. From the parapets of the redoubt poured forth a steady wave of flame, and the redoubt itself was soon hidden in the thick fog of white smoke that rose over it. The roar of this tremendous fire was simply fearful. I do not remember to have ever heard anything like it, or to have ever seen in any battle anything like so well-sustained a fire.

This also lasted about twenty minutes. Then the Russian skirmishing line, which had already reached the foot of the slope, began to withdraw, and in a few minutes they had retired to a position half way up the slope, where they halted, and the slackening of the fire told that for the moment the attack upon the redoubt, if attack it was, had failed. We now saw the Turks coming down again from the redoubt, and re-entering the trees at the foot of the slope where the Russians had been, and likewise those who had retreated towards Plevna seemed to come out again, for we saw them in the maize fields, just on the other side of the ravine between us and them, pushing along as though they would turn the right of the Russian attack. This was impossible, because the infantry on our side were lying close behind the ridge, and would have effectually prevented any movement of this kind.

During all the time this fight lasted our batteries, which I have already spoken of as having advanced so far down towards Plevna, were quite silent; why I cannot understand, for just at this moment when the attack was going on they should have concentrated their whole fire upon the redoubt, and I cannot understand why the infantry, which was lying in masses near these batteries, did not take part in the attack. The whole burden was on the left column advancing by the Loftcha road, nor was there any attack made anywhere else at the same time, nor on any other of the Turkish positions.

to see two more Russian batteries far down the direction of Plevna, just to the right of the spot we had seen the Russian troops previously. These were now within a mile of Plevna and were shelling the redoubts behind Plevna in a corner formed by the of the Sofia road. Columns of white smoke were o the sky, and the sharp whip like cracks of these ces were mingling angrily with the dull heavy roar iege guns in the big battery above. I pushed down the vineyards and cornfields and trees farther and towards the Loftcha road, following the ridge down to it ends in the deep narrow ravine running almost to the Loftcha road.

e climbed up into a tree to get a better view of the n when a Cossack came and informed us that there nothing more interesting going on on our left, that the is were advancing there, with "hurrahs." We went cross the ridge a short distance and saw what it was Russians under Imeretinsky and Skobelev, the same ok Loftcha the other day, were advancing rapidly e ridge bordering on the Loftcha road towards Plevna oftcha road, before entering Plevna, passes over the ound of a hill covered with trees, which are not so however, as to be called a wood. The summit of this

about a mile and a half distant from the Turkish ts in the bend of the Sofia road. The Russians were ing over this mountain in loose order, with cavalry for we saw a number of horsemen making their way h the trees and a few minutes later perceived a couple adrons of dragoons advancing along the Loftcha road isly treading their way as they went. They were over the top of the hill probably half a mile, when we

head

re wa

sides

ussian

shell

ls where the dragoons were massed under the trees must have been able to see these dragoons, for the fell directly in the line. Each successive shell fell and closer, so that the dragoons began to shift their n

ed perhaps twenty minutes. Then from the whole side mountain began to be heard the rattle of small arms, grew heavier and heavier, and the mountain and trees soon covered with clouds of thin blue smoke. It was

blood. Then it suddenly disappeared behind the mountain, and darkness settled down over the scene. The fire continued for some few minutes longer, and from the redoubt, as from the foot of the slope and the foot of the mountains, sprang forth thousands upon thousands of jets of flame like fireflies. Then the fire suddenly ceased. The fight for the night was over. The Russians remained in their positions at the foot of the slope which leads up to the redoubt, about a quarter of a mile from the parapet. It could not have been their hope or intention to advance any farther.

To-day's attack was begun too late to have carried the redoubt, unless it could have been done by a simple assault with the bayonet—a manner of attack which, I think, the Russians have abandoned against the trenches held by the Turks. They will probably dig trenches here in the night so as to shelter themselves from the fire of the redoubt, and then either work gradually up to the redoubt by means of shallow trenches, which could be dug very rapidly, and which would enable them to reach the parapet in the day, or, choosing a favourable moment to-morrow morning, make a rush for it. Of the two plans, the former, in my opinion, has the better chance of success. The distance from the Russian positions to the redoubt is probably something over a quarter of a mile, up a smooth even slope, where there is not cover for a rabbit. The glacis is a quarter of a mile, or perhaps a little more, in extent. The loss of an assaulting column rushing up over this glacis under the fire the Turks poured out of the redoubt yesterday, would be something terrible. If the Turks stood to their positions and fired with anything like precision, not one man would probably reach the parapets; but then it is also possible that the defenders of the redoubt, seeing the Russians close, would lose their presence of mind, and fire wildly over the heads of the assaulting party.

I now retired from the position which I had occupied during the whole fight; and although it was almost dark, and I did not think I could be seen from the Turkish redoubt, I soon found out my mistake. I and my comrade had not been under cover for more than three or four minutes, when a shell was fired at us, which passed over our heads, and exploded not more than forty feet before us, exactly in the road which we were following. As there was no battery anywhere near here, and no Russian troops either, the shot could only have been fired at us, and it was the last fired by that redoubt this evening.

We made our way back to the top of the plateau behind

The artillery fire had ceased everywhere. Everybody seemed to be waiting the result of this attack. This was just the very way to make the attack a failure, even if it had any chances of success, for the whole army to stand still and look idly on while one small detachment was trying to attack the redoubt. It is a very strange proceeding. Not a single shot was fired at the small body of skirmishers who came out from Plevna, and annoyed the right of the attack, although they were within easy range both of the artillery and infantry.

The attack had begun about five, too late in the day to accomplish anything if the capture of the redoubt had been intended. This was probably not hoped for to-day. The Russians remained in the positions to which they had withdrawn on the slope of the mountain, and the Turks began to swarm out of the redoubt down to the foot of the slope. They were evidently attacking in their turn, and bent upon driving the Russians back to the point which they had originally occupied in the morning. Although it was not light enough to see, I imagine that the Russians had already been strengthening their positions by digging, for they now poured a fire from the line they had occupied, which in steadiness and fury was only equalled by the Turks from their redoubt. The Turks had already advanced a considerable way up the slope before the Russians opened fire, and they did not stand a moment under it. They retreated through the trees, and again up the slope to the redoubt, hotly pursued by the Russians, who followed them to the foot of the slope.

The fire on both sides was now dreadful, and the Russians seem to have received a considerable number of reinforcements, for their advance was far more steady and swift, more self-confident than the previous one had been. They swept down into the little hollow between the opposite slopes, and then poured a terrible fire on the Turkish redoubt from behind the trees, and under cover of the banks, stones, earth, and anything they could find to shelter themselves. This time the attack was moreover supported by our batteries on the right, which now advanced still nearer Plevna, and concentrated their fire on the Turkish redoubt.

At the time the Russians were advancing down the hill, the whole valley was filled with smoke. The town of Plevna, as well as the Turkish redoubts and even part of the wood where the Russians were, had become invisible. The sun was now just setting behind a mass of clouds, but it was seen for a few minutes like a fiery blood-shot eye, which tinged the smoke hanging over everything with the colour of

redoubt, and were back on the summit of the low mountain or hill whence they had attacked yesterday. This hill or ridge, as it seems from here, is cut in two by a depression of considerable depth, through which passes the Loftcha road. The Russians on their side of the road were not long perceiving that the Turks were on the other side of the place, where I saw the dragoons first advancing yesterday. Imeretinsky's artillery is where it was yesterday, about a mile back from the present Russian position on the hill, and fully two and a half miles from the redoubts where he was attacking yesterday, and which cannot be even visible to his artillerymen.

Imeretinsky does not seem to have brought a single gun near to the attack than this point. The Russians seem to be very much afraid of losing their artillery. I have already spoken of the unaccountable conduct of their artillery in stopping upon the Turkish redoubts when the attack began, and which it ought to have been hottest. I can so far find no excuse for this inaction unless they suddenly ran short of ammunition at that critical moment, for the Russians were never so near the redoubt as to make it necessary for the artillery to cease firing. The attack was not sustained by the artillery, and was begun far too late in the day to succeed. The five o'clock attack, as I said, was led by Skobelev. When I arrived at my new standpoint, there was a lively artillery fight going on between Imeretinsky and the Turkish batteries which had advanced during the night on the hill on the other side of the Loftcha road. Suddenly there arose in front of the hill against the black thunder-cloud which hung over it an immense pyramid of flame, that seemed to rend the sky to the zenith. Then followed a long volume of smoke that rose white as snow against the blackness of the cloud. Then there came a series of startling reports all in a second, as though a battery of a hundred guns had been fired. Then there arose on the Russian hill a long, loud shout. They had exploded a Turkish magazine. They had

I now learned from an officer here on observation, who was sending reports to General Kriloff every few minutes of the progress of events, that Skobelev was on the ridge before me, and I was about starting to join him, when the sudden din and uproar of battle, like a thunder-clap, held me spell-bound with admiration. The crest of this ridge suddenly began to vomit flame and smoke. Above this ridge, far higher up, were balls of flames that flashed and disappeared, each leaving a small round fleece of white smoke. The Turkish shrapnel exploding over the heads of the Russians was

Radisovo, but the night now became so dark that it was impossible to find one's way across the fields. There was no water here for our horses but that contained in a muddy, stinking pool, which, however, they drank greedily. For ourselves, we obtained a drink from an ambulance, and then, coming upon a heap of unthrashed wheat, we gave a few bundles of it to our horses, and made the rest into a bed and a house for the night. The greater part of this telegram was written here in the fields by the light of a spluttering candle blown about by the wind. All around us we see the flickering of lights and camp fires in the distance, and every now and then flashes of fire in the direction of the battery of Russian siege guns, or the Turkish redoubt at Grivica, followed by a dull booming like thunder, show that here neither Turk nor Russian is asleep.

† LEFT WING, NEAR THE LOFTCHA ROAD, *Sept 9th, 9 A M*—The night passed off quietly enough. About ten o'clock there was a sudden outburst of musketry fire, which lasted a few minutes, and which was probably a false alarm on the part of the Russians or Turks. Then, again, we were awakened about twelve o'clock by loud cheering away somewhere on our left. I jumped up and looked about me. All was darkness, with here and there a fire burning dimly. The stars, and intermitten horizon that seemed like sheet lightning, followed by a heavy boom that in the stillness of the night made the air vibrate strangely. I lay down again, and went to sleep.

This morning the artillery fire began at daybreak all along the line, but in a desultory manner. Just before sunrise there was a sharp musketry fire somewhere down before Radisovo, which lasted perhaps twenty minutes, then ceased. Shortly after sunrise the fusillade began again with violence towards the Loftcha road, but it seemed to come from considerably behind where it should have been, if it were a renewal of the attack of yesterday. The Turks were shelling this place so hotly, probably under the supposition that the trees and Indian corn concealed Russian troops, that I had to decamp. I retired to a point next the ridge, where I still had an excellent view of the two Turkish redoubts in the bend of the Sophia road, the positions where the attack occurred yesterday, and the whole length of the ridge, behind which lies the Loftcha road. I then perceived that, so far from renewing the attack this morning, the Russians had withdrawn in the night from the foot of the slope which leads up to the Turkish

* BEFORE PLEVNA, *Tuesday, September 11th.*—I have to record the events of to-day, the results of which it is not possible dispassionately to estimate with the din of battle still ringing in one's ears.

To-day was the fifth day of the bombardment. After the thunder of last night the morning broke with rain, which settled down into a dense mist through which objects were invisible at a distance of one hundred yards. We lost our way several times in riding from the place where we had snatched a few hours' sleep to our old position of the day before on the heights in front of Radisovo, which exposed position the Artillery-General of the 9th Corps, Colonel Wellesley, a Prussian Correspondent, and myself, had all to ourselves.

Affairs did not seem much altered since yesterday. About 10 A.M. the fog lifted somewhat, and let us have a partial view of the scene before us. The guns of the redoubt of the Turkish first position on the central swell still replied to the fire of the Russian batteries in the valley to the east of it. The Grivica Redoubt was still alive, although its fire could not be called brisk. To our left, near the Loftcha-Plevna road, there were occasional bursts of infantry fire, but these were very intermittent, and always died out after a few minutes. The Turks were visible out in the open between their first and second positions, on the central swell, toiling away at spade work under the shell-fire of the Russian batteries. The Russian siege-gun battery near us was occasionally firing over the central swell at the entrenched camps on the northern ridge of the Turkish position, and occasionally throwing shells into the town of Plevna.

Soon after ten almost total silence prevailed, only a single report echoing sullenly among the heights at rare intervals. There grew somehow upon one the impression that this was but the calm before the storm. Of this lull the Turks jauntily took advantage to come out from behind the parapets of the earthworks and stroll about the glacis with the utmost nonchalance. Everybody spoke in whispers, as if afraid or loth to break the universal unnatural stillness, interrupted only feebly by the far-off cannonade and musketry fire of Imeretinsky, round on the extreme left, near the Valley of the Vid. The drizzling fog came down again, and veiled alike friend and foe.

At eleven precisely, a furious musketry fire suddenly burst out on our left. We could judge that it came from the soldiers pushing their way out of the gap through which passes the Loftcha-Plevna road, but the fog hid everything from us. Only the sound told us that the attack must be on the

deafening, and the heavy booming of the distant siege guns slowly pounding away at short regular intervals, as though keeping time, produced a sublime effect. The Turks were in their turn attacking the Russians from the other side, and the Russians had evidently reserved their fire until the Turks were very near, which accounted for the sudden furious outburst. "That Skobeleff," said the officer near me, "how he is giving it to them! and three or four Cossacks watching with intense excitement depicted on their faces, expressed their satisfaction, convinced that he was there in the middle of the fight, with that charmed life of his, ordering and directing

In the meantime the Turkish skirmishers coming from Plevna pushed along our side of the ridge on the other side of the deep ravine, as though going to take Skobeleff in the rear. To day our artillery seems to be more wide awake than yesterday, for a battery now came galloping down through the vines and corn, and unlimbering in a moment, began shelling these skirmishers, while the Turkish redoubt instantly opened on this new battery. The latter, however, paid no attention to the redoubt, but concentrated its whole fire on the skirmishers and, as it was taking them in rear and flank, they soon began to retire. The Turkish shells fired from the redoubt all passed over the battery and exploded in a little hollow behind, about fifty yards to the right of where we were, and all nearly on the same spot. The Turks never seem to correct their aim. In a few minutes the fire began to slacken, and two or three minutes later a loud shout swept along the ridge before us, followed by prolonged cheering. The Turks were evidently beaten back. Then the fire ceased but the shouting continued going farther and farther away. Skobeleff was evidently going at the flying Turks with the bayonet. Now the fighting is over for the present, but the big guns are still pounding away on our right.

The great infantry assault was made by the Russians on the 11th of September, the fifth day of the bombardment. The following letter, the whole of which was transmitted by telegraph, describes the operations directed against the redoubts of the first and second Turkish positions, and the redoubt on the detached mamelon south east of the town, considered by the Russians to be the weakest point of the Turkish line of defence —

About twelve the fog begins to lift, almost as dramatically as it fell. We can see the line of the Turkish northern heights, but the intervening valley is full of dense white smoke. Then presently we get a glimpse into, as it were, the interstices of smoke, and discern the Russian field batteries in the valley, blazing away with all their might at the Turkish first and second positions on the central swell, but the fog and smoke still obstinately hang round and above those positions themselves, and utterly obscure for the time the region of the attack on our left.

At one moment it seems as if the roll of the Russian musketry fire were wavering and receding. Then the sound swells again. There is an evident rally, and the noise moves forward. Just for a moment in the break of the smoke I get a glimpse through the obscurity at the Turkish second position on the central swell, and note that its cannon, disregarding the Russian fire poured into it, are firing hard in the direction of the hostile musketry fire. So mysterious is the situation that a Russian officer sitting by us starts the theory that it is an attack not by the Russians at all, but by the Turks; and it is certainly impossible to adduce any evidence to the contrary. We can make nothing of it, and are fain, in the language of Lord Dundreary, to give it up.

One thing is certain now, as the time passes on, that if the sound of firing be any indication, the infantry fighting has a tendency to retrograde from the Turkish front. It is coming nearer and nearer to us, and if it indeed be an attack on the part of the Turks they are storming the western verge of the ridge on which we lie. In utter desperation we abandon our position, walk westward along the ridge farther to our left, and nearer to the fighting just above the western edge of the village of Radisovo, exactly along the space held by Schahofskoy's staff as forepost line on the night of the 30th July. I found several batteries of Russian field artillery of the 31st Division in steady action against the first and second Turkish position on the central swell, and only a little to the right and rear of the infantry men still engaged in desultory fighting, as evidenced by the maintenance of a dropping fire.

The colonel in command of the battery told us with an assumption of indifference, which I am sure was feigned, that the fighting dying out was merely forepost work, to clear the way for the grand assault against the redoubt on the isolated mamelon, which was to be made in the afternoon. He may, indeed, have believed what he said, but another tale was told, when for an instant a sharp eddy of wind blew fog and smoke away from the mamelon and slopes leading up. There was

redoubt on the summit of the isolated mamelon south east of the town of Plevna. It was impossible to see twenty yards in front of one. Everywhere the cannon opened a heavy fire, and their smoke made the obscurity denser. It must be the assault at last, and alas! it is invisible. Louder and louder swells the roll of the hidden musketry. We reckon that Skobelev must be at work down there on our left, but we can hardly discern each other as we lie upon the crest of the ridge. We are in the thick of the din, but we might as well have no eyes.

It is the most mysterious weird situation possible to conceive. It is impossible to tell how the fighting is going. The musketry fire seems to advance but little, but its roll unquestionably swells in volume. The hiddenness of the whole thing is intensely torturing. The thick air above us, as we are lying down, is torn by the whistle of bullets, and the yell and scream of shells. In vain we chafe for the merest glimpse down into the hollow on our left. The thick waves of fog and smoke swathe everything as with a huge dingy pall. The Artillery General is almost mad with irritation at his inability to see anything. We can do nothing, however, but possess our souls in patience, but as the minutes wear on we can discern by ear that the Russians must be gaining ground.

It seems to us here at one moment, to judge by the sound of the firing and of the cheering, that they had actually carried the redoubt on the summit of the isolated mamelon. Will they then assail the redoubts of the central swell, or make a dash for the town of Plevna, or do both? It must be a terrible time for the Turks thus assailed by invisible foes, and in ignorance whence the next blow is to be struck and where it is to fall. So far as I can make out, they seem to be reserving their fire till their foes come to close quarters. As for the Russians although they are firing heavily as they advance, it must be firing at random. It is certain that they can see no enemy. In one sense the fog is an advantage for them because by it they are being somewhat spared in the rush forward. But the sound of their firing must indicate some mark to their enemies, and in the obscurity the directness of their advance must be impaired. The Turks make little response to the furious shell fire of the Russian batteries on their positions perhaps because many of their guns have been dismounted, or because they are short of ammunition, or because they feel that it would be in a great measure labour lost in the thick fog. We know nothing save that the air is full of noise and of missiles that we are a prey to a suspense which would be insupportable were it not that it must be endured.

which the artillery colonel told me had been mere forepost work, was in reality an assault on this redoubt by three regiments of the 4th Corps, pushed home in the fog right up to the Turkish shelter-trenches outside the ditch of the redoubt. In spite of the spirit with which the attack was made it failed, and Kriloff's men had to fall back up the valley traversed by the Loftcha-Plevna road, and on to the slopes over against the Turkish redoubt. I also learned that a curious order had been given to all the artillery to fire each alternate hour hard and gently.

It was observable from this elevation that the Roumanian cannon on our right had actually passed by the Grivica Redoubt still held by the Turks, and had come into action against the redoubts on the central swell, with the two guns left in the Grivica Redoubt as armament, firing into their rear. This was gallant but inexplicable till one learned that the redoubt and the entrenched camp behind it were full of Turkish infantry. To anticipate, let me state that these at sundown compelled the Roumanian guns to retire in a line with the village of Grivica. At half-past three all the Russian batteries began to fire with great swiftmess, and continued till it was necessary for the gunners to hold their hand, lest the missiles should fall among the Russian stormers once more assaulting the redoubt on the detached mamelon of which I have already spoken.

At four o'clock a mass of infantry in loose order, preceded by a skirmishing line, and followed by supports and reserves, came up out of the chaussée valley, drove the Turks out of their shelter-trenches at the foot of the mamelon, and pressed on vivaciously up its southern slope. This was a Brigade, or thereabouts, of the 16th Division. Simultaneously, down the slopes of the heights which are a prolongation of that on which we stood, another Brigade advanced. This one belonged to the 30th Division. The Brigade crossed the intervening valley at full speed, and began to advance up the south-eastern and eastern sections of the slope of the mamelon, while on the lower slopes they hung somewhat, and it seemed did not quite like the work cut out for them. They extended to the right under shelter, and then after a moment's lingering the skirmishing line dashed out of shelter and began swiftly to ascend the wide natural glacis lying below the redoubt. This glacis was already dotted with the dead of the morning.

The mass deploying steadily, followed the skirmishers, with the supports behind them, the reserves lying down under shelter behind. At that moment the shell-fire from the guns of the

no fighting there now, but with my glass I could discern the Russian dead and wounded lying about sadly thick. As for the Turks, some of them were dispersed at random, in among the wounded on the slopes. We could divine their fell purpose. Successive bodies of Turks were streaming down the slope of the mamelon against the huddled mass of Russians retiring seemingly on their shelter trenches athwart the mouth of the road ravine and ascending the slopes to our immediate right. There could be but one inference, that the Russian infantry had unsuccessfully assailed the mamelon redoubt, and that its garrison was taking the counter offensive. It was also clear that Skobelev had attacked the redoubt and covered way due east from the isolated mamelon. My artillery friend stated further that all the four pounders of his division had been sent to the left on towards the Sophia road with intent, he believed, to hinder the Turks from any attempt to retreat in that direction, an attempt which did not seem to be probable. It was edifying to witness the composure with which those soldiers of the battery who were off duty slept steadily while the cannon were being fired close to their ears, and while the shells were whistling over their heads.

Anxious to command the position a little more fully, we went yet farther to the left on the extreme westward peak of the Radisovo ridge, and thence, since the fog had now in a great measure cleared away, we looked down upon the whole scene. A regiment of the 16th Division was languidly plying its musketry fire down the valley traversed by the Loftchal-Plevna road, and appeared to have half a mind to emerge therefrom for the purpose of attacking again the redoubt on the isolated mamelon. But the place was scored by the Turkish shelter trenches, and the Turks there blazed away, steadily but not ardently. Near to us the skirmishers of a brigade of the 30th Division were dodging their way down to the base of the south eastern face of the mamelon. This was at two o'clock, and for nearly two hours little forefront affairs of no consequence went on.

Evening—I spent the greater portion of the afternoon in and about the battery on the height directly in front of Radisovo. This battery was on the extreme left of Krudener's position, and points its fire partly against the redoubts of the first and second Turkish positions and partly against the redoubt on the detached mamelon south east of the town. It was this last redoubt which the Russian chiefs clearly considered the weakest point of the Turkish position. The heavy firing at eleven o'clock on our left,

mamelon redoubt of the Turkish Plevna position remains intact.

The Emperor with the Grand Duke was on the battle-field till nine o'clock. Of the Russian losses I know no details, but they must have been heavy. Many of the wounded cannot be removed. The weather is abominable. There was about sundown hard fighting around the Grivica Redoubt, and it is reported to have been taken.

September 12th, morning:—The Emperor returned to headquarters here late last night. The battle-field of the last five days is silent this morning. There is a talk of submitting the Turkish Plevna position to a regular siege, sapping up to the redoubts, while a close blockage is instituted, with intent to starve Osman Pacha's army. The villages enclosed within his lines are full of supplies for the simple wants of the Turkish soldiers, and the fields groan with heavy crops of maize. The losses this morning are spoken of here as about 5,000 to 6,000, but there are no details. The Grivica Redoubt was taken yesterday after sundown.

The Emperor this morning has gone back to the battle-field to visit his soldiers.

The subjoined letter, in which the same great battle is described by another Correspondent, relates chiefly to Kriloff's repulse, and to Skobelev's capture of the double redoubt, with his subsequent repulse after a terrible struggle and with enormous losses:—

† LEFT WING, LOFTCHA ROAD, *September 12th.*—I was with General Zotoff when the battle of Tuesday began. It was eleven o'clock. The General and his staff were on the ridge behind Radisovo. They had just lunched. A moderate artillery fire was going on, and the General had informed me that the attack would begin between two and three o'clock, when suddenly a lively fire was heard on the skirmish line away to the left in the direction of the Loftcha road, followed by a heavy fusillade, which soon swept the road to the foot of the Radisovo ridge, and streamed up its crest nearly to Radisovo itself.

Everybody was surprised. General Zotoff looked at his watch and said, "It's not yet time. What can it be?" Mounting my horse I rode down the ridge behind Radisovo, where the fire seemed raging hottest, to try and make out what was going on. For some time it was impossible to ascertain

first and second Turkish positions crashed in among the advancing Russians. From tier above tier of continuous shelter trenches lining the outside of the ditch of the redoubt streamed a torrent of musketry fire from the Turkish infantry lining them. Still the Russians laboured doggedly onwards and upwards in the teeth of these impediments. But the slope was steep, and the ground slippery from the drizzling rain. Just at this moment we descried at first a slender column, then heavier, on the edge of the reverse slope of the mamelon, making for the redoubt from the direction opposite to the Russian advance. This proved to be Turkish reinforcements coming up to strengthen the garrison of the redoubt. To deal with this new enemy on the right flank, the Russians with great promptitude threw back their right, the soldiers lying down and firing into the advancing Turks, while the mass, with which the supports had by this time mingled, pressed on towards the Turkish shelter trenches outside the redoubt.

Here for the first time came ringing back to us, through the thick moist air, the volleys of Russian cheers. That the leaders with that cheer actually gained the first Turkish shelter-trench, I can testify from my own eyesight. For about five minutes the fate of the redoubt hung in the balance. Then, tortured by the fire on the front and flank, the Russians began to fall back, at first slowly, but presently at a run. The reserves took no part in the attack.

The Russians had fallen fast as they advanced. Perhaps they fell faster as they retired. The Turkish infantry promptly followed up their advantage, sallying out with flaming volleys down the slope after the Russians, and driving them to the shelter of their own trenches over ground studded with Russian dead and wounded. The second assault was thus, like the first, a failure, and as the dusk was coming on I anticipated no more fighting for the day, and was walking back out of the exposed battery to find my horse and ride to such shelter as the battle field affords. The Turkish infantry, regardless of the fire of the Russian batteries, were streaming into their redoubts for night duty. The artillery fire was gradually waning. Suddenly it swelled again. Yet another desperate effort, followed hard on the last, was in course of being made, on that stubborn isolated redoubt there.

The troops engaged were three fresh regiments drawn from the same divisions as those composing the previous attacking force. The previous attack from the opening to the finish had occupied just half an hour. This one was disposed of in the gloaming in a similar manner after twenty minutes. The



looking on it did not seem possible for even a rabbit to escape.

Into this storm of bullets plunged the Russians, with a shout as though of joy, and then disappeared into a little hollow, and for the moment were lost to view. Then they emerged again, disappeared in the low ground at the foot of the glacis, rushing onward as though the bullets were but paper pellets; but, alas! sadly diminished in number. Would it be possible for them to reach the parapet? Was it possible for flesh and blood to break that circle of fire? To me it seemed utterly out of the question. Did but one bullet in ten find its billet, not one of these gallant fellows would return through that cornfield. While waiting to see them emerge from this little hollow, my excitement was so great, my hand trembled so, that I could not hold the field-glass to my eyes, and for the moment was obliged to trust my naked vision. They were evidently very near the redoubt. A rush might do it. Victory was almost within their grasp, but they required a fresh accession of strength; a rush of new men from behind; another wave coming forward with new impetus to carry the first up over the glacis; a second wave, and perhaps a third, each bringing new impulsion, new strength. I looked for this wave of reserves. I looked to see if reinforcements were coming up—if the General was doing anything to help the gallant fellows struggling there against that circle of fire.

I looked in vain. My heart sank within me, for I saw that all this bravery, all this loss of life, would be useless. While these poor fellows were madly fighting their lives away by hundreds in a desperate struggle—when the victory was trembling in the balance—not a man was sent to help them. They were left to die overwhelmed, broken, vanquished. It was sublime, and was pitiful. I see a few of them struggle up the glacis one by one. They drop. They are not followed, and here they come again, a confused mass of human beings rushing madly back across that cornfield, less than half of those who went forward. When this disorderly remnant was seen flying back—broken, destroyed—two more battalions were sent to pick them up, and carry them back to the assault. Two more battalions! they might as well have sent a corporal and two more men. Two more regiments were what was required, and they should have been sent at the moment when that mass of men rose up in the cornfield, and went on with a cheer. The new troops would have reached the glacis just as the assault began to waver, would have carried the hesitating mass onward, and all

fog changing its colour, the crash of musketry and the thunder of artillery Here is what I saw

A little to my right, where General Kriloff attacked the redoubts down near Plevna, invisible from the point where my colleague took his stand, the fire had been raging with fury for nearly two hours, a steady, continuous roll and crash, intermingled with the louder thunder of cannon, which filled the air with the uproar of the bullets and shells During all this time there was little to be seen along the crest of the Radisovo ridge, where the Russian guns could be perceived at work, with figures flitting round them, dimly seen through the smoke, strangely magnified by the intervention of the fog, until the gunners appeared like giants, and the guns themselves, enlarged and distorted by the same medium, appeared like huge uncouth monsters, from whose throats at every instant leaped forth globes of flame There were moments when these flashes seemed to light up everything around them Then the guns and gunners appeared for an instant with fearful distinctness, red and lurid, as though tinged with blood Then they sank back again in shadowy indistinctness The uproar of the battle rose and swelled until it became fearful to hear—like the continuous roar of an angry sea beating against a rock bound coast, combined with that of a thunder storm, with the strange unearthly sounds heard on board a ship when labouring in a gale

This terrible storm of battle continued without ceasing for nearly two hours The Russian guns were pouring their fire into the redoubt, and the Russian infantry into the trenches, while the attacking columns were advancing cautiously under cover of the smoke and fog and standing corn to get a position as near as possible before making the final rush At about five o'clock the smoke lifted again, carried away by a gust of wind At this moment I saw before the redoubt, down near Plevna, a mass of Russian soldiers rise up in a field of Indian corn, and push forward with a shout The Turkish fire just then seemed to have been dominated, nearly silenced, by the terrible storm of shot and shell poured in by the Russians The moment seemed favourable for the assault Either the Turks were abandoning these redoubts or they were lying behind the parapet awaiting the attack Which was it? we asked The question was soon answered The Russian shout had scarcely died away when there flashed along the parapet of the redoubt a stream of fire that swayed backwards and forwards, while the smoke rose over the redoubt in one heavy white mass One continuous crash filled the air with bullets, from which to the spectator

refer to them to make the description understood. The redoubt Skobelev was attacking was a double redoubt in the bend of the Loftcha road down near Plevna. He had advanced his troops down the slope of the mountain to within easy range: As the Turks immediately opened fire upon him from the redoubt he returned the fire with steadiness and precision, putting his men under cover as much as possible, his cannon pouring a steady stream of shell and canister into the redoubt as well. In fact he worked his cannon so much that several pieces have been spoiled. He had evidently determined to risk everything to capture this redoubt, and if Plevna were not taken it would not be his fault. For three hours he kept up this fire, and just after Kriloff's second repulse, the Turkish fire having somewhat relaxed, dominated by the Russian, he thought the moment had come for making the assault.

He had four regiments of the line, and four battalions of sharpshooters. Still keeping up his murderous fire, he formed under its cover two regiments in the little hollow at the foot of the low hill on which was built the redoubt, together with two battalions of sharpshooters, not more than twelve hundred yards from the scarp. Then placing himself in the best position for watching the result, he ceased fire and ordered the advance. He ordered the assaulting party not to fire, and they rushed forward with their guns on their shoulders, with music playing and banners flying, and disappeared in the fog and smoke. Skobelev is the only general who places himself near enough to feel the pulse of a battle. The advancing column was indistinctly seen, a dark mass in the fog and smoke. Feeling, as it were, every throb of the battle, he saw this line begin to waver and hesitate. Upon the instant he hurled forward a rival regiment to support, and again watched the result. This new force carried the mass farther on with its momentum, but the Turkish redoubt flamed and smoked, and poured forth such a torrent of bullets that the line was again shaken. Skobelev stood in this shower of balls unhurt. All his escort were killed or wounded, even to the little Kirghiz, who received a bullet in the shoulder. Again he saw the line hesitate and waver, and he flung his fourth and last regiment, the Libansky, on the glacis. Again this new wave carried the preceding ones forward, until they were almost on the scarp; but that deadly shower of bullets poured upon them; men dropped by hundreds, and the result still remained doubtful. The line once more wavered and hesitated. Not a moment was to be lost, if the redoubt was to be carried.

would have gone into the redoubt together. Instead of this, General Kriloff sent two battalions, and that when it was too late. The poor fellows went over the hill singing gaily, and disappeared in the fog and smoke. I could have cried for pity, for I knew that most of them went uselessly to simple slaughter. It was impossible for these fresh battalions to renew the assault with the slightest chance of success. These two battalions, like the rest, were doomed to almost certain destruction.

The fog again settled down over the redoubt, hiding Turks and Russians alike. I could tell by that fearful rifle fire that they were going at it again, and I turned away. Soon the cessation of firing told that it was all over, but the second attack was more easily repulsed than the first, and I perceived likewise that the whole Russian attack made from the Radisovo ridge by Krudener and Kriloff was repulsed all along the line. It was inevitable, I foresaw it from the first. The mistake was made and repeated continually by the Russians of sending too few men against such positions, according to old rules made before breech loading days. In those days a fixed number of men were considered enough to carry a position and sending more was only increasing the chances of loss without increasing the chances of success, but the number required to carry a position defended by breech loaders is about four or five times as great as against muzzle loaders—a fact which the Russians have not yet learned, but which is all the more important when the breech loaders are in the hands of soldiers like the Turks.

I will now relate the events which occurred on the Russian extreme left, commanded by Prince Imeretinsky and General Skobelev. Here the attack was conducted in a very different manner. While the battle was raging in front and to the right of me, it raged with no less fury round the redoubts and on the other side of the Loftcha road, but up to the moment of the second repulse of Kriloff, Skobelev had not yet made his assault. He had well prepared the ground, however. At four o'clock he had brought down twenty pieces of artillery to the spur of the ridge overlooking Plevna. Not more than a thousand yards distant from the redoubt I saw an immense volume of smoke rising, and heard a terrible thunder, which was not more than five or six hundred yards away on my left. It was evident that Skobelev, risking his artillery in this advanced position, was determined to make a desperate effort to capture the redoubt in front of him.

I have already described the positions here, and now only need

it. It was dominated by the redoubt of Krishine on the left already spoken of. It was exposed at the Plevna side to the fire of the sharpshooters, and to the Turkish forces in the wood bordering on the Sophia road, and open to the fire of the entrenched camp. There was a cross fire coming from three different points. At daylight next morning the Turks opened fire from all sides. The distance from the redoubt at Krishine had of course been accurately measured, and the guns dropped shells into the redoubt with the utmost precision on the exposed sides. The back of the redoubt was a solid rock on which it was impossible to erect a parapet. All the earth had been used for the construction of the parapets on the other side. It was evident that the position was untenable unless the entrenched camp on the other side of the Plevna and the Krishine Redoubt could be taken. Skobelev renewed his demand for reinforcements made the evening before. Although his losses had been great, the spirit of his troops was so good that with another regiment he was willing to undertake to capture the redoubt and the entrenched camp, or he would undertake to hold the positions until something could be attempted in some other quarter. Could one or two more positions be carried during Wednesday, say the Krishine Redoubt, and one entrenched camp on the same ridge as the Grivica Redoubt, the fall of Plevna might be considered certain. At sunrise the Turks began an attack upon the captured redoubt, and the storm of battle again raged with fury here while all was quiet everywhere else. The desperate attack of the Turks was repulsed. Another attack was made and another repulse, and this continued all day long, until the Turks had attacked and been beaten five successive times.

The Russian losses were becoming fearful. General Skobelev had lost, he thinks, 2,000 men in attacking the redoubt. By the afternoon he had lost 3,000 more in holding it, while his battalions shrivelled up and shrank away as if by magic. One battalion of sharpshooters had been reduced to 160 men. A company which had been 150 was now forty. An immense proportion of officers were killed, or wounded only. Only one commander of a regiment is alive; scarcely a head of a battalion is left. Two officers of the staff are killed, one of whom was Verastchagine, brother of the great artist. Another brother was wounded. General Dobrovolsky, commander of sharpshooters, was killed. One officer was blown to pieces by the explosion of a caisson. Captain Kurapatkin, chief of the staff, standing beside this officer, had his hair singed and suffered a severe contusion. Only General

Skobelev had now only two battalions of sharpshooters left, the best in his detachments. Putting himself at the head of these, he dashed forward on horseback. He picked up the stragglers, he reached the wavering, fluctuating mass, and gave it the inspiration of his own courage and instruction. He picked the whole mass up and carried it forward with a rush and a cheer. The whole redoubt was a mass of flame and smoke from which screams, shouts, and cries of agony and defiance arose, with the deep mouthed bellowing of the cannon, and above all the steady, awful crash of that deadly rifle fire. Skobelev's sword was cut in two in the middle. Then a moment later, when just on the point of leaping the ditch, horse and man rolled together to the ground, the horse dead or wounded, the rider untouched. Skobelev sprang to his feet with a shout, then with a formidable, savage yell the whole mass of men streamed over the ditch, over the scarp and counter scarp, over the parapet and swept into the redoubt like a hurricane. Their bayonets made short work of the Turks still remaining. Then a joyous cheer told that the redoubt was captured and that at last one of the defences of Plevna was in the hands of the Russians.

Having seen as much as I have seen of the Turkish infantry fire from behind trenches and walls, I thought it was beyond flesh and blood to break it—a belief which had been strengthened by Kuroff's repulse, which I had just witnessed. Skobelev proved the contrary, but at what a sacrifice! In that short rush of a few hundred yards three thousand men had been left on the hill side on the glacis the scarp, and the ditch—one fourth of his whole force. I believe that Skobelev looks upon such attacks upon such positions as almost criminal, and disapproved highly the whole plan of attack on Plevna, but he believes that if an attack is to be made it can only be done in this manner, and that, although the loss of men may be great, it is better that the loss should be incurred and the victory won, than half the loss with a certainty of defeat. Skobelev seems to be the only one among the Russian generals who has studied the American war with profit. He knows it by heart and it will be seen by those who have studied the great civil war, that in this assault Skobelev followed the plan of the American generals on both sides when attempting to carry such positions, to follow up the assaulting column with fresh troops without waiting for the first column to be repulsed. If the position proves too strong for the first column, then reinforcements are at hand before they have time to break and run.

Skobelev had the redoubt. The question now was how to hold

battle as he presented. I saw him again in his tent at night. He was quite calm and collected. He said, "I have done my best: I could do no more. My detachment is half destroyed; my regiments do not exist; I have no officers left; they sent me no reinforcements, and I have lost three guns." They were three of the four guns which he placed in the redoubt upon taking it, only one of which his retreating troops had been able to carry off. "Why did they refuse you reinforcements?" I asked. "Who was to blame?" "I blame nobody," he replied. "It is the will of God."

† BUCHAREST, September 14th.—I left the battle-field before Plevna at noon yesterday. The two redoubts taken by General Skobelev on Monday evening were held by him for twenty-four hours. During Tuesday the Turks made six attacks, and finally, about six o'clock in the evening, drove him out. He lost three cannon which he had placed in the redoubt. He asked for reinforcements several times, but General Levitsky refused them, thinking Skobelev had enough men to hold the redoubt. Finally, General Kriloff, on his own responsibility, sent the remnant of a regiment which had attacked the lower redoubt near Plevna, and whose effective strength was reduced to 1,000 men utterly unfit to go into battle. Even this regiment arrived a few minutes too late, and another regiment sent from the Headquarter Staff to reinforce him arrived when Skobelev had already retreated. The loss of this redoubt is disastrous for the Russian attack, as it seems that the Russians in possession of these two redoubts and the Grivica Redoubt had counted upon recommencing the offensive immediately. This is now impossible until the arrival of reinforcements. When I left the battle-field all was quiet except a light artillery fire. The Russians are still in possession of the Grivica Redoubt, which was under a continual heavy fire from the Turks. This redoubt was visited by Colonel Wellesley, who says it is heaped full of dead Russians and Roumanians.

The campaign against Plevna has been a severe one for Correspondents. A Correspondent, the brother of the famous artist, Verastchagine, has been killed. The great artist himself, as is well known, is seriously wounded. Two more Correspondents—one representing the *Scotsman*, and the other the *St. Petersburg Exchange Gazette*—have been wounded; while others—nearly all—come back seriously ill, or completely knocked up. A Correspondent of the *Times* has succumbed to the unhealthy weather. The day the attack began on Plevna he was for several hours at the point of

Skobelev himself remained untouched. He seems to bear a charmed life. He visited the redoubt three or four times during the day, encouraging the soldiers, telling them help would soon arrive, Plevna would soon be taken, victory would soon crown their efforts, telling them it was the final decisive blow struck for their country, for the honour and glory of the Russian arms, and they always replied with the same cheery shouts, while their numbers were dwindling away by hundreds. He again and again sent for reinforcements, and again and again informed the Commander-in-Chief that the position was untenable. The afternoon wore away and no reinforcements came.

General Levitsky, as I have been informed, formally refused reinforcements, either because he thought the position, in spite of General Skobelev's representations, was tenable or because he had no reinforcements to give. General Kriloff, on his own responsibility, sent the remnant of a regiment which had attacked the redoubt, which I saw rush forward and then break through the Indian cornfield. Of the 2,500 there were barely 1,000 left, so it was utterly incapable of going into action that day, and even this regiment arrived too late. General Skobelev had left the redoubt at four o'clock to go to his tent on a woody hill opposite. He had been there scarcely an hour when he was informed that the Turks were again attacking the right flank on the Loftcha road immediately above Plevna. He galloped forward to see, and was met by an orderly with the news that the Turks were also attacking the redoubt a sixth time. He dashed forward towards the redoubt in hopes of reaching it in time, but was met by a stream of his own men flying back. They were exhausted by forty-eight hours' incessant fighting, and were worn out, hungry, and dying of thirst and fatigue. Owing to the inactivity of the Russians during the day, the Turks had been enabled to collect an overwhelming force, which had made one last desperate effort and had succeeded in driving Skobelev's force out. One bastion was held till the last by a young officer, whose name I regret I have forgotten, with a handful of men. They refused to fly, and were slaughtered last man.

Just after this that I met General Skobelev, the first day. He was in a fearful state of excitement and his uniform was covered with mud and filth, his hair, his cross, St. George twisted round on his head, his face black with powder and smoke, his eyes bloodshot, his voice quite gone. He spoke in a hoarse, hoarse voice, and saw such a picture of

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It was just after this that I met General Skobelev, the first time that day. He was in a fearful state of excitement and fear. His uniform was covered with mud and filth, his sword broken, his Cross of St George twisted round on his shoulder, his face black with powder and smoke, his eyes haggard and blood shot, and his voice quite gone. He spoke in a hoarse whisper. I never before saw such a picture of

and the Turks withdrew to the other redoubt, a little to the north of the captured work. But it was soon apparent that the redoubt could not be held without reinforcements, and three Roumanian battalions; with a battery of artillery, were ordered forward. They lost their way, however, in the fog, and were thus precluded from rendering the required assistance, consequently when the Turks returned to the attack the allies were driven out.

The third assault soon followed, and the work was finally captured at seven P.M. Four guns and a standard were the trophies of the feat of arms. More than once during the night did the Turks advance with shouts of "Allah!" but no serious attack was made. Thus, to my surprise, when I reached the Plevna Valley this morning, I beheld a flag-staff up, defiantly exposing the Roumanian flag, in that hitherto dreaded Grivica Redoubt. I was given to understand that preparations were in progress for an attack on the Turkish entrenched camp on the Turkish northern ridge about 2,000 metres west of the Grivica Redoubt.

I found the village of Grivica full of ambulance waggons and wounded-bearers, and in a line running from the top of the hill in front of the redoubt down into the valley in front of the village was a line of field batteries just coming into action. In the rear of the village, and also lying down the slope of the hill, was a line of Roumanian infantry under the shelter of the cover-trenches; and in their rear again was a reserve of field batteries. The infantry force in this advanced line amounted in all to about 4,000 Roumanian troops.

By this time it was past ten o'clock. As the position we occupied yesterday on the height above Radisovo had the double advantage of the best view of any assault on the entrenched camp opposite, and also of anything occurring on the Russian left flank nearer Plevna, I rode thither, passing under a very heavy cross fire as I traversed the valley and the way between the Turkish and Russian batteries. Reaching the Russian positions, I rode along the reverse slope of the Radisovo height until I came behind our old observatory of yesterday, and I remounted the ridge to find our old friend Krüdener's left flank battery still in position. Just before I arrived a shell from this battery had caused a great explosion in the redoubt forming the second Turkish position on the central swell, much to my intense regret that I was not in time to see this fortunate shot. Having satisfied myself that I might safely push on a little nearer Plevna without missing the attack on the Turkish entrenched camp opposite, I made

death, but happily now is out of danger. Lieutenant von Huhn, a Prussian Military Correspondent for a German paper, has just returned very ill. Severe though the campaign has been to Correspondents, it has not been so fatal as that of SERVA, in which, out of twenty who were at the front, three were killed and one wounded.

The following letter describes the taking of the Grivica Redoubt —

* BUCHAREST, *September 14th* — A friend whom I left at the Plevna front has been kind enough to forward to me the following particulars of a later date than my last despatch covered. He writes from Poradin on the evening of the 12th —

As you may remember, when we rode to the rear last night, we saw no reason to doubt that the Grivica Redoubt was still in Turkish hands, knowing as we did that the assault made upon it at three o'clock had been repulsed, and we set down the smoke rising round below it to an attempt on the part of the Turks to drive back the Roumanian artillery which had passed the redoubt, and were in action absolutely in its front. In reality, however, the Grivica Redoubt fell last night before the determined bravery of the Roumanians. I forward you detailed information concerning the protracted struggle.

It appears that at half past two P.M. the redoubt was attacked by two Roumanian brigades, each consisting of four battalions, and three battalions of Russians. The Roumanians attacked from the east and south east, the Russians from the south and south west. The attack was made in the following manner — First a line of skirmishers, with men carrying scaling ladders, gabions, and fascines among them. The latter had their rifles slung on their backs, and were ordered in no case to fire, but merely to run forward, fill up the ditch, and place their ladders behind. Then followed the second line in company column formation for the attack followed by the third line to support the assault.

At half-past 4

it is so

too late

retire — only two companies of infantry, which rallied, and, keeping under cover, maintained a brisk fire against the work.

At half past five the attack was renewed by a battalion of the Roumanian Militia, followed by two Russian battalions of the 17th and 18th Regiments. The redoubt was then carried,

running again as soon as I had caught my breath in the little battery. The Roumanian officers squatting in the entrance of the redoubt shouted to me to run in their direction. This I did, and was thankful when, in rushing in among them, and picking my way through the dead, they pulled me down to the ground and made me squat beside them for security against the continuous shower of lead.

I had now time to look about me, and examine the work. It has a ditch all round it, and the parapets are high and thick. The only entrance, curiously enough, is a narrow opening facing to the south, it having been constructed for defence towards the north. Presently I asked leave to enter the redoubt, which was granted with the advice to make a bolt of it, as there was a dangerous corner to pass. This I did, and pray I may be spared ever again witnessing the sight which met my eyes.

The interior of this large work was piled up not only with dead, but with wounded, forming one ghastly undistinguishable mass of dead and living bodies, the wounded being as little heeded as the dead. The fire had hindered the doctors from coming up to attend to the wounded, and the same cause had kept back the wounded-bearers. There were not even comrades to moisten the lips of their wretched fellow-soldiers, or give them a word of consolation. There they lie writhing and groaning. I think some attempt might have been made, at whatever risk, to aid these poor fellows, for they were the gallant men who twenty-four hours before had so valiantly and successfully struggled for the conquest of that long uncaptured redoubt, and it was sad now to see them dying without any attempt being made to attend to them.

I could fill pages with a description of this harrowing scene and others near it which I witnessed, but the task would be equally a strain on my own nerves and on those of your readers. I am aware that Colonel Wellesley, the English military attaché, having visited this redoubt and witnessed the spectacle it presented, spoke of it to a Roumanian officer, who explained that the doctors were obliged to take cases in the order of their occurrence, and since the Roumanians had suffered not a little two days before, the doctors had still not been released from their attention upon those early cases.

In the centre of the redoubt is a kind of traverse and a curious covered corridor runs around it. In this I imagine the Turks sought protection from the shells which fell into it unintermittently for so many days before its capture. An incessant rain of bullets poured over the work as I made my way over the bodies on the ground. I was naturally deeply interested

my way still farther to the left to the tree beneath which we yesterday witnessed the Russian unsuccessful assaults on the Turkish mamelon redoubt. The guns of Imeretinsky and Skobelev which half encircle the western half of the valley, were pounding away as yesterday, but did not appear to have made much advance, if any. There soon, however, became visible a long line of fitful puffs of bluish smoke out of the wood which faces the covered way connecting the two redoubts covering the town towards the south west. This rifle fire was speedily answered by a line of Turkish fire from behind the covered way, as well as a hot fire from some shelter trenches in the middle of the valley which separated the combatants.

Having watched this apparently harmless duel for some time, we came under the notice of the Turkish skirmishers in the valley too closely to render it advisable to remain here any longer. I therefore remounted and returned east along the reverse flank of the Radisovo height with intent to cross the valley, and if possible get into the Grivica Redoubt. On my way every now and then I had a glimpse of the slowly progressing, or indeed almost stationary, attack on the Turkish entrenched camp opposite. I descended the slope into the valley, crossed it, and made my way up through the village of Grivica towards the redoubt. On mounting the plateau above I soon found myself under cover of the transverse hillock running down into the valley from the height above, and sheltered behind it from the fire of the Turkish camp were massed a few battalions of Roumanians, with a battery or two, constituting the reserves intended to support the attack on the entrenched camp.

I was here told that it would be impossible to ride up into the redoubt, for as soon as I left the covered way by the hillock I should come on to an open gap between it and the redoubt, which is continually swept by two Turkish guns. Intent on persevering, I observed a short way off a ditch running up the hill in the direction of the redoubt. This I determined to avail myself of as far as it reached, and leaving my horse, I commenced my way up the ditch, which was filled with Roumanian infantry. After meandering about in all directions I found that the ditch soon ended in a cul de sac. Between me and the redoubt, a distance of about six hundred yards, there was a small Roumanian battery, and for this I ran at speed, the ground I traversed being literally strewn with dead Roumanians and Russians. The fire seemed to become heavier as I neared the battery, which, however, I reached in safety. There was nothing for it now but to commence

stantial success been won. The Russians were definitely thwarted, and finally paralyzed on the 11th instant.

I find, nevertheless, the English journals up to the 15th instant so utterly ignoring the reality as to write of the Russian partial successes. The Russians have lost before Plevna this time more than 20,000 men. For the first time in my knowledge has the work overwhelmed the Russian medical and sanitary staff, and great numbers of the wounded are literally rotting and festering unfed, their wounds undressed, their cleanliness disregarded. As for the Roumanian army, its surgical arrangements are utterly inadequate. The surgeons make no concealment of the grim fact that a wounded man's time for being looked at comes on an average two days after he has been struck.

The Russo-Roumanian army has abandoned now even the pretence of prosecuting the attempt against Plevna, and has fallen back into the positions occupied before the commencement of the bombardment. The field artillery remain still in some of the positions of the bombardment. The intention is announced of a third renewal of the attempt in a fortnight with the arrival of the Guard. I have great doubts whether another attempt will be made on Plevna, and very much stronger doubts whether such an attempt, if made, can succeed.

The Turks are better soldiers individually than the Russians. Of that, after seeing not a few battles, I stand assured. The strategy of both, perhaps, is equally bad; but as regards both major and minor tactics the Turks are simply immeasurably superior. The Turks are better armed than the Russians, both in great and small arms. The Turks have engineers who can design admirable defensive positions. The Russian engineers seem incapable of repairing a hole in a bridge. The Turks seem as well provisioned as the Russians. The Turks are flushed with success. The Russians are depressed by failure after failure.

Nor is this all that impairs the Russian soldiers' dash, for that it is becoming impaired my reluctant personal observation of the war can testify. There is no braver man alive than the Russian soldier, but a brave soldier cannot continually face more than the fair chances of war. The Russian soldier is called on to face these, and dangers in addition which appeal with infinitely greater intensity of horror to his imagination. He knows that if he but receives a bullet in the ankle joint when he is in the front of an unsuccessful attack, the chances are even that he will die a death of torture, humiliation, and mutilation. No moral courage, no mental hardihood, can

to know whence the Turks were firing, and having reached the parapet I crawled up, and taking off my cap, peeped over to my immense astonishment I saw another Turkish redoubt not more than two hundred and fifty yards from us, to the north west, from which this fire was being maintained. The Roumanians, it appears, had failed to capture this redoubt yesterday, but it is absolutely necessary that they should become masters of it, as their position is rendered almost untenable by its remaining in the hands of the Turks. The fire had not diminished as I returned from the redoubt down hill towards the village, and the Correspondent of the *Scotsman*, who had joined me, was struck by a bullet on the ankle which luckily did little harm, only grazing the ankle bone.

We rested a little behind the hillock where the Roumanian reserves were lying, and then pushed back in order to see what progress was being made, towards the Turkish entrenched camp. We had scarcely left the Roumanians when a tremendous Turkish shrapnell fire which searched most thoroughly the reverse slope of the hill where they were, was opened against them and maintained until they were compelled slightly to change their position, and the skirmish line had also to fall back. Since by this time it was 6 P.M., I knew that the attack had been abandoned for that day, and therefore returned to quarters.

The Russians estimate their losses on the 11th at 125 officers and 5 000 men. I estimate the Grivica losses at about 1,500 killed and wounded.

* *BUCHAREST, September 17th*—It is incomprehensible to me that nobody in England appears to realize that the third Battle of Plevna was in effect fought out on Tuesday, the 11th inst., and that the Russian failure was then consummated in virtue of the defeat of the successive Russian assaults on the redoubt crowning the mamelon to the south east of the town.

These assaults, categorically described by me, were the important and crucial events of the day. The mamelon redoubt is the key to the position. The Russians were free to choose their own time for the attack. It was open to them to make the attack with the strength which seemed to them most appropriate. They attacked three times during the day, and failed. Can the hope, then, be strong, that it is possible for them ever to succeed?

The Russian official telegrams are by no means joyous documents, as assuredly they would have been had any sub-

constructed, which will, it is hoped, be ready by the end of October, but I predict not before Christmas. Steam ice-boats have been ordered in view of the freezing of the Danube, with intent to keep the river open. A contract has been taken for warm clothing and housing for the troops during the winter campaign. Everything indicates the Russian determination to carry on the war to the end. Anybody knowing the feeling, not only of the Russian nation but of the army, knows that no other policy is possible; but the men on whom lies the responsibility for that mismanagement of the campaign which has so complicated the future may expect a stern reckoning. General Ignatieff is just now under a cloud. The generals who have muddled the war now complain that he did not give them to understand that the Turks would fight so hard, and misled them as to the number of men needed to make a successful invasion. As well might they say that they did not know the Turks were going to shoot with bullets. All the facts about the Turks were common property before the war; their war-strength, their bull-dog courage behind earthworks, their tenacity, their ferocity. Only one element was left out of the calculation—the profound incapacity of some of the Russian generals.

The Roumanians yesterday again attacked the redoubt from which a fire is so steadily maintained on the Grivica Redoubt. After displaying much gallantry they had to abandon the attempt. It is said that they will renew it, and there is certainly plenty of fight in Prince Charles's gallant young army, but in my opinion little chance of success unless they work up to the hostile redoubt by sap.

It was foreseen that a long time must elapse before the Russian Army would be in a position to renew its attack upon Osman Pacha with any chance of success. General Todleben, the engineer who, twenty-three years before, had defended Sebastopol with so much skill, was sent for, to advise upon the best means of effecting the reduction of Plevna. The following letters describe the state of affairs before Plevna towards the end of September:—

† SGALINCE (BEFORE PLEVNA), *September 23rd.*—The position of affairs has little changed here. The attack on Plevna has settled into a siege. Since the day when Skobeleff was driven from the redoubts he had captured there has been no fighting

stand against this horrible consciousness, and in the attack on the 11th I distinctly observed his reluctance to begin the storming part of the attack

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SECOND DEADLOCK IN BULGARIA

Tone of feeling at the Russian Head Quarters—The New Plan of Operations against Plevna—Kriloff's movement on the Turkish Line of Supply—General Kriloff's Failure—Entrance of Convoys into Plevna—An Expedition in the Black Sea—Renewed Fighting in the Shipka Pass—Great Attack by Suleiman Pasha—Failure of the Turks and subsequent Panic in their Army—The Russian Army of the Lom—Retrograde Movement of the Czar's Army—Battle of Curkoi—Retreat and Dismissal of Mehemet Ali Pasha—A Reconnaissance of the Turkish Positions—The Military Situation in Bulgaria—Public Feeling at Constantinople

THE failure of the third attack on Plevna profoundly discouraged the Russian Army, from the Commander in Chief to the private, and lowered immensely the estimation in which the military power of the empire had previously been held in Europe. The Emperor, however, on this occasion showed the tenacity of his family. He ordered up very large reinforcements and prepared for a winter campaign. The following is a letter from the Russian Headquarters, written six days after the defeat —

† GORNY STUDEM, *September 19th* —I find the feeling here not so gloomy as I had expected. Military men acknowledge that they have been beaten, but as much by their own errors as by the bravery of the Turks, and there is not the slightest sign of hesitation, or weakening of the determination to fight it out. The idea of peace is not entertained. Everybody feels that it is a death struggle in which Turkey or Russia must go to the ground irretrievably, and the final issue is not doubted for an instant. Although the struggle must be hard, and may be long, Russia must ultimately crush her adversary, it is held, if only by mere brute force, in default of science, skill, and generalship.

Every preparation is being made for a winter campaign. A military railway from Frateshti to Simnitsa is to be

† VERBICA, *September 24th.*—The Roumanians are advancing steadily against the second Grivica Redoubt by trenches. They are now only eighty yards from it, the distance between the two redoubts being about 250 yards. Their fighting spirit and cheerful endurance of hardships are admirable. This redoubt taken, there is another about half a mile distant. Then two, or perhaps three, entrenched camps along the northern ridge, whose western termination is an elevated position overhanging the River Vid. The Turks are not pushing counter saps, and if the assault be delivered with resolution the redoubt should certainly fall.

Great volumes of cannon smoke were seen about Loftcha yesterday, indicating fighting there, but up to midnight General Zotoff had no news from that quarter, or from General Kriloff. I am now starting to join General Kriloff behind Plevna, on the Sophia road.

† ETROPOL, NEAR SOPHIA ROAD, IN REAR OF PLEVNA, *September 25th.*—The Russian attempt to cut off Turkish supplies so far has not been successful. In spite of a large force of cavalry and artillery we have here, the Turks have succeeded in pushing two convoys through under our very nose. The first was a convoy of about 2,000 waggons, accompanied by reinforcements for Plevna, consisting of ten tabors of infantry, one battery of artillery, and three regiments of cavalry.

General Kriloff, who is in command here, did not discover them until they had arrived at Teliche, where he went to attack them. He found them already entrenched with guns in position and mounted in a battery. An artillery fight ensued which lasted all day, with no result, Kriloff being unable, of course, to attack so large a force of infantry with his cavalry. That night he retired to the previous position he occupied at Dubnik, on the Sophia road, and nearer Plevna. Next day the Turks advanced upon Dubnik, and attacked him in turn. Another artillery fight ensued, which lasted all day. Towards evening, however, two columns of infantry came out of Plevna, and taking Kriloff in the rear obliged him to withdraw, thus leaving the road open for the passage of the reinforcements and convoy. He retired upon Tristenik, while General Lascaroff, who had only then succeeded in forming a junction with Kriloff, was obliged to retreat further back across the Loftcha road to Bogot. The Turks, therefore, passed the convoy without the loss of a single waggon.

The whole affair was very feebly managed, partly, I believe, because General Kriloff's instructions were unsuited to the force under his command. He was told to hold the Sophia road at

of serious consequence. The Roumanians, however, have persisted in making attempts against the second Grivica Redoubt. They are now steadily pushing forward by flying sap. The Russians mean to pursue the same tactics on their side as soon as they can get spades and shovels. The head-quarter staff have succeeded in understanding that these implements are occasionally useful in war, and have ordered a supply of them. If everything goes well, that supply may be expected in a month or six weeks, and then the siege may begin in earnest, provided the Roumanians, who have shovels, have not already taken the place. Regular approaches and the cutting off of the supplies are the means now adopted for the reduction of Plevna. This course was as open on the 1st of August as on the 1st of October.

General Kriloff, who now commands the cavalry, is in the rear of Plevna on the Sophia road for the purpose of cutting off the Turkish supplies. As the Turks have few cavalry, and that not good, General Kriloff should have it all his own way. The country is open, well adapted for cavalry movements, and an active leader with cavalry and horse artillery should make the passage of convoys difficult. As the Turks must have more than 60,000 men in the Plevna position, the question of supplies must be an urgent one with them, unless, as has been alleged, they have accumulated them for several months. This seems improbable, and the magazines surely must require replenishing. There has been no news from General Kriloff since he left, but distant cannon fire was heard to day coming from far behind Plevna, which would indicate that he is at work.

News has been received here that more Turkish forces are coming from Sophia. As they can only be Mustaphis, not Nizams, it is hoped that Kriloff will meet and drive them back, though if there be really a possibility of starving out Plevna, it might be better to let these additional mouths to feed come in, and confine attention to the destruction of trains. Prince Charles remains at Porodin, General Zotoff's headquarters are at Sgalince. The general staff is at Gorny Studen. News has just been received of Hifzi Pacha's arrival at Plevna with a small escort. It is supposed that he avoided Kriloff by taking the by ways. The approaching Turkish forces are at Lucovatz. General Kriloff is somewhere between that place and Teliche. Lascroff must have joined Kriloff ere now. I should have stated that Kriloff passed round the north of Plevna, starting from the Roumanian right. If Hifzi's arrival means that the Turks are taking the offensive, it will probably be against Loftcha.

minutes in writing a report to General Kriloff, to say that he meant to attack. By this time the convoy for the most part had got safely over the Vid, either by the bridge or by a ford, so that the report was superfluous. We threw a few shells at them, to which the guns protecting the bridge instantly answered. Then, as it was quite dark, we retired to Etropol, our whole spoil being a pair of oxen.

Evidently things must be managed better than this if the Turkish supplies are to be cut off.

† *TRAPNIK. Sunday 26th.* -- Upon returning here this morning we found General Kriloff gone with his whole detachment to Kreza, over the Iker. It seems that a reconnaissance he sent to Mahala yesterday reported that there is a Turkish officer, high in rank, at Kreza, organizing a force of cavalry from the Circassian villages in the neighbourhood, and likewise obtaining recruits for the infantry. Kriloff has gone off there in hopes of taking the officer prisoner and stopping the recruiting business. The whole force at his command is hardly necessary for this, and this is not the way to prevent the arrival of supplies along the Sophia road. It is raining fearfully, and the population of several abandoned villages is camped around Tristenik in the mud, presenting a sad spectacle.

† *VERBICA. ROUMANIAN HEADQUARTERS. September 26th, evening.* -- The Roumanians are pushing forward their works against the second redoubt with a perseverance and a pluck worthy all praise, and which is the more remarkable as the Russians are doing absolutely nothing on their side. The rain is continuous, the mud in the trenches is fearful, and it is very cold besides, but officers and men alike stick to their posts in spite of this with a pluck and resolution which excites my admiration. They evidently mean to take the second redoubt, or have a desperate try at it. They are now within sixty yards with their third parallel, and they are just beginning the fourth parallel, which they mean to push within thirty yards of the redoubt before giving assault. At this short distance the terrible Turkish fire is reduced to a minimum, as the Turks will not be able to fire more than two rounds before they come to the bayonet. The Roumanian soldiers seem to be stout fellows, and I think they are sure to get this redoubt. Were the Russians advancing as rapidly on their side Plevna would fall before two weeks. But from all I can make out the Russians are completely at sea. They seem to have no plan, no idea, no head, and not to know what to do next.

Dubnik, a thing which was manifestly impossible against infantry, especially at a point so near Plevna, where he could be attacked in the rear. A general in command of such detachments should have no definite instructions except to do as much harm as possible to the enemy, choosing his own time and place. Convoys should be attacked forty or fifty miles beyond Plevna and the attack kept up if necessary until under the very guns of the place. In a running fight of this kind, extending over forty or fifty miles, even with a convoy protected by infantry, the greater part of the carriages would be smashed by the artillery, the draught horses and oxen killed and the drivers frightened away. As the Turks have little cavalry, and that only of the very poorest kind, the Russian cavalry can range the whole district between Plevna, Widdin the Danube, and the Balkans with impunity, the country being so open that there is not the slightest danger of being cut off by infantry. General Kriloff is not a cavalry man at all, and he handles cavalry as if it were infantry, is afraid of being cut off, and thinks he must keep his communications open, forgetting that cavalry in such an open country as this can only be cut off by cavalry, of which the Turks have none worth speaking of. The Bashî Bazouks and Circassians never attempt to make a stand even against one-fourth of their numbers. General Kriloff, instead of retiring upon Tristenik to keep his communications open, should on the contrary, have cut loose from the Roumanian right wing, and advanced on the Sophia road to the Balkans with half his forces to meet the next convoy, while the other half might have moved in the direction of Widdin to meet supplies coming from there. In this way only can cavalry be made useful here.

Upon retiring, Kriloff left two regiments of Cossacks at Etropol to watch the Sophia road, and another convoy slipped through the fingers of this detachment yesterday. Etropol is too far from the Sophia road, in the first place. Then they did not place outposts sufficiently advanced to give warning in time. This convoy, besides, did not come along the Sophia road, but on another alongside it, which we have only lately discovered. By the time we received information of its coming and had reached the scene of action, the convoy was almost under the guns of a protected bridge on the Sophia road over the river Vid.

Had we charged even then we might have captured the greater part of the convoy, as it was only protected by cavalry that ran away. We waited several minutes for the artillery to come up, and then the officer in charge lost about fifteen

parallel with the main road through the pass, might stand a very fair chance of success, and this would appear to have been intended on the present occasion.

The troops told off to commence the attack (nearly 3,000 in number) did their duty admirably, and succeeded in obtaining a firm foothold upon the rocky fort, a considerable portion of which soon fell into their possession. Exposed for hour after hour to a galling fire on their front and on both flanks, it is marvellous how they stood their ground so long, seeing, even with their then advantage in point of numbers over the enemy in their immediate front, that they could not, unless a diversion were made in their behalf, hope to maintain their ground, even if the entire fort fell into their possession. Upon whose shoulders the blame rests (and certainly Suleiman himself ought to be freed from it) is not an easy matter to ascertain. The only reason which can be assigned for the failure is that the points chosen by the right and left attack were found to be too strong; still, to capture them was one matter, but to make an important auxiliary movement is a far easier one.

Very feeble flank attempts were made by the generals to whom the duty was assigned, and scarcely credible accounts have been bruited about of the inefficiency, and even absence altogether from the fight, of the officers with these troops. The action lasted until nearly mid-day, when the unsupported troops in the centre, having no hope of co-operation from east or west, and having actually seen a large body of the enemy rapidly coming up to attack them, were very properly ordered to retire. Disappointed and galled as they were, it was not to be wondered at that they fled in disorder down the side of the steep rock, which it had cost them so much to gain; and great is Suleiman Pacha's good fortune that the fear occasioned by their flight did not communicate itself to the rest of his army. A useless sacrifice of life and limb is alone the result of the day's work; about 1,000 were killed, wounded, and missing, and there is scant hope of the Turks finding the latter taken prisoners, the bayonet having been actively employed during the retreat.

We shall doubtless not have to wait long before the next attack is made, as the weather in the Balkan range will soon be breaking. When that movement is commenced, it will, at the least, be with the knowledge of why the present attack failed; and costly as has been the acquirement of that knowledge, it may in the end save disasters still greater.

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C SHIPKA PASS, *September 22nd.*—After a defeat, the next

They are waiting for reinforcements, which are arriving slowly, and which, when they are all here, will hardly more than cover the losses by battle and by sickness during the last two months. I think history offers no such example of a splendid army in such an utterly helpless condition. The

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possibility³ that they have mined the redoubt, and mean to blow it up when driven out

Their defeat before Plevna had not relaxed the firmness with which the Russians held the Shipka Pass, by which they hoped one day to re enter Roumelia. The two next following letters are from the Turkish side, the first relating to a most determined attack made by Suleiman Pacha on the 17th of September —

Q SHIPKA PASS, *September 19th* —The attempt to carry the formidable Russian positions in the Shipka Pass has for the moment proved unsuccessful. Fort St Nicholas, the high rock frowning upon the mouth of the pass, which to the Czar and Sultan is of equal importance, had an exceedingly narrow escape of changing owners on the 17th instant. At one time, indeed, soon after the attack commenced, which was shortly before daybreak ("the darkest hour before the dawn" being well chosen as best for all night attacks), it was fully believed that it had fallen. Had the attacking force been supported by the efforts of those upon whom devolved the duty of co operation, all might have been well with the Turks, and the standard of the Prophet have again assumed its place on the entire range of forts, at present forming so insuperable an obstacle to the capture of the now celebrated pass.

Suleiman Pacha has waited until he has succeeded in forming as handy an army as any of his brother generals can boast of, and, from all that can be gathered, it is no fault of his that he is not at this moment crowned with the success which the plan he had formed appears fully to warrant. The causes have not yet been fully ascertained, but there can be no doubt it was in no way his intention to dream of capturing the Russian positions by a direct attack upon the principal one of them. A threatening demonstration on some or one of the chain of forts in the rear of Fort St Nicholas and

is not always attended with advantage in an army situated as is that of the Balkans.

Ten thousand men is a very moderate estimate of the number placed *hors de combat* since the 20th August saw the Russians retiring to their rocky fortress before the onward march of the hitherto victorious Turks, and what is the result beyond the infliction of perhaps a similar loss on their enemy, who has had time to display his skill, and has effectively done so, in marvellously strengthening his previously weak defences? The fighting going on as I write in the main army near Bjela cannot fail to have its effect here, and a victory on the north may in an instant do for Suleiman what a month has not enabled him to effect.

The sweeping condemnation at Philippopolis of between three and four hundred unfortunate Bulgarian insurgents—taken with arms and without—may strike terror to the hearts of those of the Sultan's subjects of that nationality who remain faithful or are wavering in their allegiance, but it certainly strikes one as a ruthless display of what may be expected if the Crescent again shines over this unhappy land.

The failure to take the Pass on the 17th was the more annoying as Suleiman Pacha, anticipating the issue of the struggle, had telegraphed to the Seraskier that he had captured Fort St. Nicholas, and the good news had been transmitted by the Porte to all its Ambassadors at Foreign Courts.

The duties which had been assigned by the force of circumstances to the army under the Czarewitch, designated at its formation the Army of Rustchuk, had from the first, as we have seen, a defensive character. This force had to guard a line extending from the Danube to the foot of the Balkans, and prevent the interference of the Turkish Army of Shumla with the Russian line of communication with Tirnova, or with the operations about Plevna. The line was moved backwards and forwards from time to time, but it was never broken through. Early in September, the Czarewitch had taken up a position between the Kara Lom and the Ak Lom, which rendered it possible for the Turks to make a turning movement, as his line extended from Elena through Djulin to Cairkoi, leaving the country between Cairkoi and the Kara Lom open to the enemy. It was therefore decided to fall back, and, instead of Schahofskoy advancing to join the Czarewitch, the latter relied upon his own forces. At this time the Turks were

thing naturally to be expected is a panic among the troops to whom the fortune of war has been unfavourable. Such was the case on the night of Tuesday last, when from some unknown cause—possibly owing to the howling of the wind, which had risen high as the sun went down and predisposed the nerves of the picquets to believe every crackling branch a Russian footstep—the alarm was given, and the greatest excitement prevailed amongst the horde of irregulars who form the rear in advance and the van in retreat of Suleiman Pacha's numerous army. They cared not to wait until the cause could be ascertained—the fact of the alarm being given was enough, and the Russians might be on their heels. At every step as they rushed pell mell down (generally laden with the booty they had succeeded in plundering on the march), they added to the confusion, especially amongst the swarms of camp followers, and the great numbers of Bulgarian peasants who are enforcedly employed in the transport service.

It was not for more than an hour after the panic had arisen that any signs of its being allayed could be observed, though the admirable conduct of the regular troops in calmly taking up their assigned positions should have put to the blush even such poltroons as those who had been the first to fly. A little

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shots would herald the Russian advance. He did not, however, give himself the time for thinking, but joined his comrades in the rush to the rear, till he discovered himself to be alone and without a following, even of the class who are to be found with all armies in the field.

Something ought to be done to efface both Monday's misfortune and Tuesday's disgrace, or the morale of a large portion of this army will be seriously deteriorated. Upwards of a month has elapsed since Suleiman Pacha occupied the heights which have given him such a powerful advantage over the Russians, who are cooped up in the rock and the earthworks behind which lie across the pass, and yet nothing has been effected towards the capture of what has now become a veritable stronghold. His telegrams have announced the closing of every inlet of the besieged with the exception of the main road from Givrova, and why this is not attempted to be blocked whilst a sufficient portion of the army keeps the garrison at bay, is by no means apparent. Suleiman's next step is looked for with the liveliest interest, as upon it depends the continuance of that confidence which his good name has hitherto inspired, and a change of generals

little, because our troops had the advantage of holding good defensive positions in cover, and only attacked the Turks in order to follow up a repulse. At the Battle of Cairkoi the Turkish loss was over three thousand, increasing the sum total of dead and wounded since the attack on our line a month ago to between nine and ten thousand men. This loss is evidently too great for the resources of Mehemet Ali, and he has found himself obliged to evacuate the territory he had gained with so much difficulty, for the same reason that the Russians withdrew,—namely, a lack of corps to hold the entire line.

We now have before us the rather serious spectacle of two armies occupying a line sixty miles long, which neither has force enough to hold against an advance of the other. The all-important rôle of the army of the Czarewitch has been to cover the line of communications to the Balkans, and to keep the Danube from Sistova downwards. Events have proved that the advance beyond the Jantra was useless, since it was delayed until the Turks recovered from the panic which the crossing of the Danube caused among them. By assuming the offensive the Russians have gained nothing whatever. The positions along the Bjela-Rustchuk chaussée (high road) are strongly fortified, and Bjela itself may be said to be impregnable. It will be understood that the Jantra is far in the rear of the actual positions held by the army of the Czarewitch, for his advance posts are from fifteen to twenty miles to the eastward of the river, and his corps are concentrated at about two-thirds that distance toward Rustchuk and Rasgrad.

In the upper valley of the Lom no advance has yet been made. The weather continues clear and cool. Snow lies on the summits of the Balkans. The roads are hard and dry again, and the effects of the recent severe attack have vanished.

+KARA VERBOVKA, *October 4th.*—The sudden and unexpected withdrawal of Turkish forces across the river Lom, which began on Sunday, opposite the right wing of the 13th Corps and the left of the 11th, is as inexplicable as it is complete and positive. The tactics of Mehemet Ali, since his brisk and successful aggressive movement a month since, have been to keep in sight at some point of his line a sufficient force to make it seem evident that an attack was meditated, and, by quickly moving this force from one side to the other of the semicircle occupied, he has kept the attention of the Russians alive along the whole line. There is no question of the truth of the statement, made in my last despatch, that both armies,

preparing for a forward movement, and when the Czarewitch fell back, the Turks followed up, engaging his rearguard at Karahassankoi, Popkoi, Opaka, and Kaceljevo. These affairs were all treated as great victories by the Turkish reports, but they were regarded in the Russian camp as of comparatively small importance, so far as their strategic results were concerned. Many losses were sustained on both sides, with no compensating result. The Porte, however, considered that Mehemet Ali ought to be able to do more than he had done, and under its pressing orders he fought the Battle of Cairkoi, on September 21st, and having failed, retreated on the 24th. This failure cost him his command. To an English Correspondent at Varna he said, "he had been dismissed because he had refused to break his neck against a stone wall." He has since stated that he had only 40,000 men at his disposal.

† HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY OF THE CZAREWITCH, DOLNY MONASTIR, *October 1st*—A whole week has passed since the unsuccessful attack of the Turks on the Russian positions at Cairkoi, and they have made no other offensive movements. It has long been apparent to me, as I have frequently hinted in previous despatches, that the army of Mehemet Ali is comparatively small. It has shown itself only at one point at a time, and although occasionally ostentatiously displaying tents on hill tops, and executing manœuvres in plains in sight of the Russian positions, it has nevertheless failed to give me any impression of large numbers. At headquarters it is believed to consist of 40,000 men, but this number is certainly exaggerated.

Within the past two or three days the enemy has renewed the tactics he has diligently practised since the withdrawal of the army of the Czarewitch from the Banicka Lom, and, after having made vigorous but unsuccessful attempts to turn the left of the 11th Corps at Cairkoi, he has disappeared quickly from the positions he held one week ago. According to the reports of our scouts, he has re-crossed the Lom, and is now concentrated near Kaceljevo. The Russian outposts are now at Polomarca, Opaka, Ablava, Ostrica, and Strobko, all along the west bank of the Lom, occupying very nearly the same positions as they held before the retrograde movement.

It will be remembered that the army of the Czarewitch withdrew after three battles along the line, in each of which the Turkish losses were very great, and the Russian comparatively

I have just returned to Kara Verbovka from a reconnaissance made to discover the whereabouts of the enemy. This is a village situated on the Lom, nearly opposite Kaceljevo, which occupies a narrow little valley half a mile east of the river. For two days this has been neutral ground, and small bands of Turkish marauders have been scouring the valley for meagre plunder. With a small force of cavalry under the command of Prince Manueloff and Baron Kaulbars, we left the village, where we had assembled under cover of a dense mist, and descended into the green valley of the Lom. A cold rain, which had drenched us all night, continued at intervals as we began our march, and the fog gradually disappeared as we descended the slope, disclosing the whole landscape, the hillsides across the valley, and the dotted rows of straw huts which the Turks build wherever they pass a day. Not a living thing was visible in the valley, not a sign was there of an occupied camp. A regiment of hussars was sent along the road to Opaka and Polomarca, while Cossacks and lancers took possession of the village of Kaceljevo and surrounding heights. Two Bashi-Bazouks were captured, who reported that the enemy were 35,000 strong in the immediate vicinity of Kaceljevo. Therefore we proceeded with some caution. Arriving at the summit of a hill to the east of the village, we found strong batteries, freshly made; an outpost camp just deserted, with garments and utensils left behind in hasty flight; and still farther on a large deserted camp, with artillery hidden in the bushes.

Two miles beyond the village we came out on an open field, and there lay before us a panorama of the whole Turkish encampment miles away, extending along the farther side of the valley on the east branch of the Lom, around Solenik and Kostankza, in front of Pizanca, Turlak and Esirdje. We could count seven distinct camps, with great droves of cattle feeding on the adjacent hillsides, and far away on the horizon two or three isolated rows of large square tents. There seemed to be very little artillery, but considerable regular cavalry, and a force perhaps of 15,000 infantry, who were mostly Egyptians. From the hill, and just across a valley dividing us from the Turkish camp, could be seen, lying flat in the furze, a strong detachment of infantry ready to welcome us. A few Cossacks dashed down into the valley and exchanged some shots with the outposts. The cattle were hurriedly driven away as the lances of our three squadrons bristled on the hill-top, and there was a stir of preparation visible in the camps, but we only looked on until dusk, and then retired. Meantime, the hussars on our

it is evident to every one who knows the positions that at any time within two or three weeks after the attack on Karahassankoi it was an easy matter to break the line at almost any point. Mehemet Ali did not follow up his advantages; he sauntered across to the Banicka Lom, saw plainly the Russian organization very much broken up, and knew that the force was very much weakened by the drafts from Plevna; nevertheless, he paused lazily in the sunny grain fields along the plateau east of the Banicka Lom, and let his enemy recover and pull himself together again, and stand on the defensive concentrated in a little half circle scarcely ten miles across.

One must come to one of two conclusions—either there was very bad generalship on the Turkish side, which the well-directed attack partly disproves, or the advance was only a demonstration on a large scale. For my own part, I am much inclined to cling to the latter opinion, considering the facilities the Turks have for knowing the numbers and dispositions of the Russian forces, and the superiority of tactics of the Turkish generals, proved by their skilful manœuvring in the face of the enemy. Of the generalship on the Russian side it is unnecessary to speak, for it is a matter of universal comment and criticism, and I need only refer to the descriptions of the different movements which I have sent from time to time by telegraph, and let every one judge for himself.

Here on the field it is with the brave, patient private soldier that one must sympathize the most. Armed with a rifle which has a range a third shorter than the Turkish weapon, he is obliged to stand fire for a long time before he can return a shot. Ordered to march squarely into a rain of bullets without any cover, he never for a moment hesitates longer than to cross himself, but is off cheerfully, and enthusiastically convinced that he is serving God and his country when he is fighting the Turk. Wounded, he still goes on until he falls, and then never loses his pluck even to the last. What a pitiable sight it is to see the long trains of ox-carts of the rudest description, their octagonal wheels grinding, screeching, and jolting over the rough roads a mile and a half an hour, every one with two or three wounded men whose groans almost drown the squeaking of the axles. A soldier is wounded at the front. Possibly he gets attention from the courageous attendants of the Red Cross under fire, and then is carried by his comrades miles to the rear and is put into one of these torture carts, to be pounded and jolted for three days until he reaches a hospital.

While I relate the experience of almost every soldier wounded

right had found a small camp, and charged down upon it, capturing a number of horses and cattle, and killing a score of Bashi Bazouks and Circassians. They report the enemy strong at Karahassankoi and Sadina. The result of the reconnaissance is to prove that the whole Turkish force, retired along the line of railway between Rasgrad and Rustchuk, is strongly concentrated at several points, especially near Kadikoi and has now re-occupied almost the same line as that held before the advance of a month ago.

The cold storm continues, and the roads are impassable for artillery. If there be an engagement of importance it must take place in the immediate vicinity of Rustchuk, but I doubt if the Turkish army will attack for some time, as it has evidently chosen strongly defensive positions with the intention of discontinuing its attempts to break through the Czarewitch's forces.

+ HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARMY OF THE CZAREWITCH, DOLNY MONASTIR, *October 3rd* — We are still playing at the old game of hide and seek on a large scale, and the oft repeated story of the sudden disappearance of the Turks is again told at headquarters, and commented on with more gravity than it is possible for any one to command who appreciates the ludicrous side of the situation. Imagine two large armies, forty or fifty thousand strong, losing each other every day or two! It is a farce which if it were not serious, would be in the highest degree ridiculous. A long irregular line from the Danube to Tirnova is held by opposing forces, neither of which thinks itself strong enough to make a serious attempt to break the line of the other, but both manœuvre about on the hills, wearying the soldiers in rapid marches and wasting them in small engagements which result in considerable loss of life, but in no advantage to either side. I doubt if there has ever been such a grand farce enacted since the invention of gun powder.

Even the advance of the army of Mehemet Ali a month ago I have ceased to regard as a serious attempt to break the line of the Czarewitch's army. Beginning at Karahassankoi, where General Leonoff on the left and centre of the position, and Baron Kaulbars at Hardarkoi on the right, made a most gallant resistance, which was rivalled by the defence of Ablava and Kadikoi a few days later, the advance was unchecked by the

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Pavlo, only a few hours from Gorný Studen. What is more,

itself with only the officers of the line to direct its movements. On one occasion a squadron of cavalry held the wing of a position. It was fiercely attacked by an overwhelming force of infantry. Without a word from the staff, the line officers took charge of the whole left wing and saved the day. Compare the life of the gallant colonels and brigadiers who sleep night after night at the forepost, personally superintending every detail of placing the vedettes and protecting the front, with the existence of the generals, so far away that they learn of a battle after it has been lost, drinking champagne to the sound of music,—and the sympathies must go with those who do the work. Perhaps in this descending scale of merit in the Russian Army is to be found the reason why the front of the line is not better protected, why the Turks get lost to us now and then, and why a severe fight results only in loss of life and not in any change of position.

The long line of the Czarewitch's army has been exposed to attack constantly for months. From the headquarters, whenever a battle occurs, a member of the staff is sent away post haste to advise and assist the general in command at the point in question, and the position is considered safe, I suppose, because this combination of practical and theoretical knowledge must necessarily cover all possible turns and crooks of military science. It is true that such a line has been difficult to keep with a force so limited. It has been about fifty miles long, with scarcely as many thousand men to hold it; but notwithstanding unaccountable movements and wild manœuvres the line has been kept to the present time, and half of the original plan of the Russians has succeeded. Of course this plan was to make two walls of men from the river to the Balkans, in order to permit the safe passage of troops towards Adrianople. Both armies on the flanks were to be strictly defensive ones, and the active force was to be over the Balkans.

The *naïveté* of this plan of campaign is apparent, and Plevna has proved how much easier it was to draw the lines of these walls on the map than to build them and keep them unbroken. No one could imagine the fierceness of the fire from the breech-loading rifles, which is far hotter than any ever before experienced by soldiers. From a thin skirmish line of Turks comes a pelting of bullets that in muzzle-loading times a regimental line in close order could never equal. A successful charge is a physical impossibility. To look ahead a little, I venture to say that no one in the Russian Army can think of the winter campaign with complacency. Forage is already short. After a day's rain the roads are ankle-deep with mud,

at a distance from the main hospitals, I do not intend to imply that as far as it goes the ambulance service is defective, the trouble is that it doesn't begin to go half far enough, but is on the same cumbersome scale as the supply trains, with far too little force to properly attend to the wounded which come to the rear after any large battle, and a certain ease and deliberation of movement which is agonizing to one accustomed to see the duties of the ambulance corps attended to with enthusiastic promptitude

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of every one I must say that I have seen more to horrify me in the treatment of the wounded here than ever before, and in every case there was a good reason for the neglect. But no one will pardon a neglect which is the result of lack of hospital supplies on a field where all other supplies are over abundant

One thing the private soldier certainly has, and that is food, and plenty of it, and of excellent quality, but the clothing is scanty for this cold season that has so suddenly come upon us.

In the summer the soldiers wore their coarse white shirts as blouses and carried their coats in their knapsacks. Now the sacks are light, and everything is put on to resist the cold. The thin linen shelter-tents are only an apology for sleeping under the sky, wind and rain penetrate everywhere, boots torn and thin after months of almost constant marching become soiled

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nized prerogative of the officer, but stands patiently and takes it as he takes the fire of the Turks, as he toiled along the dusty tracks in the intense heat of summer—always without a word. Supplies of clothing are already on the way here the bootmakers are busy on all sides making up the leather which arrived a few days ago, and before winter fairly sets in every one will be comfortably clothed

Side by side with the men in the ranks, sharing with them all their hardships, having scarcely greater comforts and luxuries, are the officers of the line, most of them intelligent and even cultivated men who have all the merits of the private soldier. They are the strong buttresses of the army, and deserve every sympathy and encouragement. Often, very often, I have seen a detachment left in a position by

From this chaussée one can overlook the whole country, and the Russian camps are all visible, nestled in the grain fields near the villages.

East of the Lom the country is quite similar in character, but more broken by small valleys, and near Rasgrad is much wooded. Between the Lom and Banicka Lom is a plateau of irregular horseshoe form, full of villages, interrupted by frequent deep valleys; but in general terms a high plateau. This was entirely occupied by the Turks in their recent advance, but they penetrated among the hills farther west at only one or two points, and confined their demonstrations to the positions along this line. The small ridges with the patches of woodland formed a succession of screens, behind which it was easy to manœuvre large forces without their being seen by the enemy, and the network of roads, more or less good, made concentration at different points an easy matter. There were the two armies facing one another across a valley perhaps half a mile wide; the foreposts kept up an almost constant guerilla fight; several attacks were made of more or less importance; and then suddenly nothing remained on the hill-tops but empty straw huts and bush shelters; and the Cossacks leisurely wandered off to find where the Turks were gone.

But for the fact that the Circassians are about as dangerous to the Turks as they are to the Russians, they would be excellent soldiers, for they protect the front quite perfectly. As it is they are quite as likely to shoot the Turkish officers for the sake of booty as they are the Cossacks. An officer who came to Popskoi with a flag of truce begged for a large sheet to display when he returned to the lines, and had a Cossack sent on in advance to announce his arrival, for he was in great fear of his own foreposts, declaring they were quite sure to shoot him if he did not take great precautions.

When on Tuesday last the right wing of the Rustchuk army was seen marching along the hills across the Lom, to the music of drum and bands, with colours flying and arms flashing in the sunlight, it seemed very much like bravado, and was a fitting flourish at the end of an aggressive campaign of a month without a result. Word came in that there was no one in the valley of the Lom, so a reconnaissance was planned, and the order was given for three regiments of cavalry to assemble in the little village Kara Verbovka, on the west bank of the river, on Wednesday evening. I was invited to accompany the expedition, which was commanded by Prince Maneloff and Baron Kaulbars. The result of the reconnaissance I have announced by telegram, but the details of the expedition

and it is difficult to get about on horseback, almost impossible with wheels. Fuel is not over abundant. Thus far we have burned the fences about the houses and the timbers of the houses themselves. In cold weather, in a territory already pretty well scoured of every scrap of straw and hay, and with absolutely nothing to support life, a good day's ride in fine weather from the base of supplies, life will be a constant struggle. The cold wind from the Balkans is now a great discomfort and a source of much sickness. Yet the soldiers look remarkably strong and may support the rigours of winter with the same remarkable endurance which they have shown in the heat of summer. But there is all the difference in the world between a close warm room in a hut in Russia with the thermometer below zero, and the same temperature in Bulgaria in a shaky cabin or a thin tent.

+DAMOGILO, *October 7th*—The same officer who proposed a plan for the taking of the grand redoubt in Plevna, by loading a cannon with St George's crosses, and firing them into the enclosure, has suggested that it might have been well to advertise for the Turkish armies of the past few weeks, for they have been most of the time quite lost to us. But we have found them now, and are likely to keep track of them in the future, because it looks very much as if they intend to stay where they are, considering they have behind them the line of the Rustchuk Varna railway. Without stopping to discuss the Cossack, whom I regard as the most ineffective cavalryman in the world for scouting service, I will briefly refer to the topography of the country, in order to make clear the position of both armies, if not partly to account for the ease with which the Turkish camps disappear like soap-bubbles in the very face of the Russian forces.

The valley of the Lom is broad and open, with the river winding about in a fertile interval between very high hills for the most part covered with a dense growth of scrub oak, quite impassable except by frequent cart paths, which cross them in all directions. The valley is much broader, and the hills

er towards Popkoi,
een steep cliffs in a
ore than a rod wide,

Lom and the Beli
Lom—are rivulets a yard or two broad only, and are crossed at frequent intervals by bridges and fords. West of the Lom and the Banicka Lom the hills are broad and flat-topped, with little wood, and the Tirnova Rustchuk chaussee runs along the summits in a straight line north east to Rustchuk.

their hands. In all probability they will be set free, as they don't wear any uniform, and will find their way back to the Turkish lines again. It is said that a great many have done this, and I cannot doubt it.

When the fog lifted we filed down the gentle slope into the valley of the Lom, and crossed the river by a ford, then quickly up the hill to the village of Kaceljevo, near at hand, which was quite as lifeless as the one we had just left. Here the Cossacks, who are supposed to know the way always, took the wrong path and delayed the advance an hour or more, for they were to go forward in the centre, the Lancers on the left and the Hussars on the right. At last we climbed the great hill back of the town, and had the whole country for miles around under us like a map. To the south was the great mountain near Karahassankoi, and beyond, a glimpse of distant Popskoi in the interval; east in the horizon was the ridge where the railway runs; north, the hills about Rutschuk; and west, the valley of the Lom, and the summits far beyond. Cruising about in the low oak-trees on the hill-top we came suddenly upon a deserted battery, and a camp near by, evidently just left, for, notwithstanding the recent rain, dry clothing was lying about, and quantities of utensils were strewn along the road. Equipments left behind showed that regular cavalry had occupied the post, and scattered clothing of Bulgar women proved that the marauders had made this their headquarters as well. The Bashi-Bazouks had told us that the hills about Solenik were covered with camps, so we were not surprised to see from the east side of the summit white tents all along across the valley of the Beli Lom.

We approached until we could see the uniforms of the soldiers in the camps, and the only unusual movement there was when the Cossacks came out in full sight, and then we saw the Turks driving away over the hills the great herds of cattle which were feeding on the slopes. There were but few soldiers in the camps, but a cautious advance to the edge of the hill overlooking Solenik showed the infantry lying in the edge of the furze to receive us. Of course we could not attack. The Cossacks went down and had a brush with the Circassians in the edge of the valley, and when darkness came on we retired and met the Hussars, who had been successful in breaking up a camp they had found, killing twenty-five Bashi-Bazouks and Circassians, and not losing a man.

In the rain and darkness we found our way near midnight to the positions again; having made an advance in the twenty-four hours of only about twenty-five miles from headquarters. When we came near the spot where we left our luggage the

and of the trip across the river to send the despatch to Bucharest, are worth mentioning

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away—a few Cossacks, two officers, myself and servant—towards the village, passing the Russian positions along the Banicka Lom at about nine o'clock. We had a couple of Bulgars for guides who, although born and brought up in the neighbourhood, knew nothing of the country, and lost us entirely before we reached the top of the hills across the river. On we went, always ascending, and it began to rain drearily long before we got to the summit of the range. At last we ran across a deserted Turkish battery with plenty of wood lying about, built a fire, lay down in the ditch and slept an hour, and woke up to find that the run had extinguished the fire. We knew that the Turks always build huts wherever they camp, so we searched in the darkness until we found some bush shelters, crawled under them, and slept until day-break, completely drenched by the cold rain, which flooded the ground and entered the hut in a dozen streams.

A dense fog covered the earth, hiding the landscape completely, and after building a fire with straw dried with the heat of our bodies and warming ourselves thoroughly, we started away through the mist and rain to find the village, and at last came to the rendezvous just before the regiments assembled there. When we came into the village there was not a living thing in sight, the fog canopy made the silence most oppressive, and we listened in vain for a sound. A most mournful sight was this village, full of pretty little Turkish cottages half hidden among the trees.

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stranger. There had been plenty of marauders about, so we searched the village thoroughly, and the Cossacks found a couple of Bashi-Bazouks hidden away in the fields near by. Both had Peribody-Martini rifles, were tall, square-shouldered fellows, well dressed in the ordinary Turkish peasant's costume, and carried a great quantity of ammunition. The thought naturally occurred to me that they would be immediately shot, but they were treated with marked gentleness,

to the rear. I was told

o the responsibility of

l blood, yet I believe that

no other people in the world would have let these fellows off, for they were simply murderers caught with their arms in

even this miserable shelter is welcome. Bulgar houses, which we shunned as we would the pest, on account of the myriads of insects that swarm within the walls, we now look upon as a luxurious refuge from the damp, chill atmosphere. To give a brief resumé of the new positions: The Russians are now concentrated nearer the Danube than before, opposite the strong force of Turks at Kadikoi, a village about ten miles from Rustchuk. The line still lies along the Banicka Lom, but cavalry occupies the whole territory west of the Lom. The positions of the Russian right are about fifteen miles from those of the Turkish left, along the railway near Rasgrad, while the 12th Corps and part of the 13th are in the immediate neighbourhood of the Lom, near Rustchuk. The 11th Corps has not greatly changed its positions during the past two weeks.

In the following letter, a Correspondent who had followed the campaign from its commencement reviews the errors and failures of the Russian generals.

† BUCHAREST, *Oct. 15th*.—The rain has been pouring down for a week—steadily, persistently, obstinately, with scarcely a respite; the sun has not looked out once; the sky is a dark grey spongy blanket, hung low down over our heads, which is dripping, running over, and discharging itself in bucketfuls. The weather god has positively taken sides with the Turks, and having delayed the opening of the campaign for more than a month, now seems determined to bring it to a close a month or six weeks earlier than was to be expected. For should this weather continue the campaign is at an end, and nothing can be done but wait for the ground to freeze and a fall of snow, when possibly a winter campaign may be attempted. There is still hope that this may not be the case, that the rain may cease, and that we may yet have a month, and perhaps even six weeks, during which something may be done. Everything therefore depends upon the weather, and the prospect is not encouraging. The results of the campaign so far, may be summed up as follows:—The Russians have crossed the Danube, they have taken the fortress of Nicopolis, and they have lost 50,000 men in killed and wounded.

For a campaign undertaken with such high hopes, with everything requisite to bring it to a victorious conclusion except military talent—begun with two most important operations brilliantly and successfully carried out, this is a result as unexpected as it is discouraging. For be it remembered that the only real conquests of the campaign, the passage of the

day before, we two separated from the force and went to the camp, expecting to find some one to welcome us. Not a tent, not a soldier was there, all had disappeared during the day, having been ordered off to some position we were unable to discover. It was midnight, we had neither eaten nor drunk since the evening of the day before, for no one carried rations on the expedition on account of the heavy roads and the necessity of going light weight. There was nothing to do but to stable the horses in a ruined house and turn in there ourselves and sleep. The next day, before taking the despatch and letters I was about to send to Bucharest, we made an effort of a few hours to find the spot where we had left our luggage, but after having fasted forty two hours I gave up the search and rode for Batin arriving towards dark. Leaving our horses in the village, we had a mile and a half to walk to the Danube and landed at last on the island a mile above the new bridge an hour after sunset. We knew there was a path across the island where the bridge is being built, so we fought our way through the tangled undergrowth in the rain and darkness until we reached the muddy track and followed it northwards until it came plump into the Danube on the other side. Not a boat was to be found, not a soldier was within hail. At last we found some Bulgars, who guided us to a camp of marines, who kindly set us over the stream, and we were landed in the marshes three or four miles from the solid land, where the lights of Petrosani twinkled in the distance.

A brisk cold wind drove across the marsh, and the rain ceased for a time, but it was as dark as a pocket. On we trudged, scarcely able to walk after our excursion stumbling about over the track, at times knee deep in the muddy water, and after great difficulty reached the lagoon which separates the marsh from the high land. To find the ' ' we only solved after a half-hour other side of the bridge was a ' ' who was with difficulty persuaded to let us pass. At two in the morning we were sound asleep on the floor of a dirty little Greek restaurant with Russians, Greeks, Moldavians, and Bulgars singing choruses over the cheap wine, and filling the room with vile smoke.

I have given a meagre description of a trip in Bulgaria in bad weather to show what the difficulties are, and how it is quite out of the power of any one to make even a short journey except at great personal discomfort, and with no little fatigue. It seems as if our picnic days are over now. Sleeping in a tent in the hot weather was rather to be avoided, but now

proofs of incapacity as these, why do they not, if they have any patriotism left, resign and go home? These are questions which not only the Russian people but the Russian army is asking, without receiving any satisfactory answer.

It is true that the Russians began the war with an insufficient number of troops—that is, with an insufficient number to take Constantinople, or even to reach the capital, and I am willing to admit that it is doubtful whether they had enough to take Adrianople, though I am convinced they had enough in the beginning to have crossed the Balkans and occupied the country to the very gates of that place. But from saying they have not enough troops to take Constantinople to the assertion that they have not enough to take Plevna there is an immense difference. It is a difference the importance of which the headquarter staff have probably not even perceived. It simply means this—that they began a war with the avowed intention of capturing Constantinople with a force which they find, after having been increased by half, is still too weak to capture an unfortified village twenty miles from the Danube. For although Plevna is fortified now, it was not fortified when the march on Constantinople was begun.

Such a mistake, such a miscalculation, avowed and acknowledged, and even offered as an excuse, is a confession of imbecility beyond what even could have been expected. The Russians had across the Danube at the time of the last attack upon Plevna, including the Roumanians, about 200,000 men. If this force is not capable of taking Plevna, what force, it may be asked, will be required over the Danube before a sufficient number of troops can be sent against Plevna to ensure its capture? What force will be required to cross the Balkans? How many more troops must we have to take Adrianople? And, above all, what force will be required to reach Constantinople? Evidently, at this rate we shall soon be into the millions; and if the Emperor means to prosecute the war with the present headquarter staff, he had better call out two million men at once.

It may not be without interest here to take another glance at the last Battle of Plevna, and see what military lessons can be drawn from it. In the first place, the lesson already taught by the previous affair, which was only too clear to anybody who had eyes to see—the madness of attacking trenches defended by breechloaders by assault—has been enforced and confirmed, and the Russian generals have at last learned it at an expense of 15,000 more men. But there are other things which they may learn from it which they ought

Danube and the capture of Nicopolis, were made with a loss of less than three thousand, and we have absolutely nothing to show in exchange for the rest of this immense loss of 47,000 men. Had the Russians sat quietly down after the capture of Nicopolis and not moved a foot, or had they gone to sleep and slept all summer, they would have been in exactly the same position they are in to day, and they would have been 47,000 men richer, that is, nearly one third of the force with which they first crossed the Danube at Sistova. One third of the army lost and nothing to show for it but three defeats—such is the result of General Levitsky's military science—Levitsky, the Moltke of Russia.

There is another point worth noting in reference to this campaign, which is that the two great Russian successes, the passage of the Danube and the passage of the Balkans, were accomplished by a lucky chance, in which good luck and Turkish incapacity counted for a good deal more than Russian skill and generalship. At Sistova, as General Dragomiroff very truly remarked, the Turks were asleep, at Shipka they were unprepared. If we look, on the other hand, at the successes of the Turks, we see that they have been accomplished, first, by a splendid stroke of strategy, second by the most desperate valour, third, by consummate skill in engineering. The Russian successes were the result of chance and unforeseen circumstances, the Turkish victories, on the contrary, were won by downright good generalship, military skill, and science—elements which may be calculated, estimated, and counted upon in the future.

These are the facts, let Generals Levitsky and Nepokoitchitsky digest them as they may. Their excuse is, I believe, that they had not enough troops, and that they did not know the Turks were so strong. The excuse is a very feeble one. In the first place, the Russian mobilisation began and the Russian staff was formed last November, five months before the declaration of war, seven months before the fighting actually began. Where were their spies during all this time, and why did they not have correct information with regard to the force, armaments, organization, and numbers of the Turks? And if they had not enough troops there were plenty more, and the Emperor was ready to give them had they been asked for. Again, why did they not know of the march of Osman Pacha from Widdin to Plevna? There was a month during which Osman Pacha was marching upon Plevna, and Generals Levitsky and Nepokoitchitsky never knew it and never found it out. Why did they not know, and why did they not find it out? And having given such

far as the redoubt was tenable he had enough troops to hold it as long as it could be held. He asked for troops to continue the attack upon the redoubt of Krishine, or upon the entrenched camp on the other side of Plevna, or he would undertake to hold the place while something was attempted on some other point; only whatever was to be done would have to be done quickly. But the morning wore away with the continued attacks of the Turks, continually repulsed and continually renewed, and the whole Russian army lay quiet all day long and watched that heroic struggle and did nothing. This inactivity of the Russians allowed the Turks to finally concentrate in the evening an overwhelming force against Skobelev and to overpower him. The headquarter staff could not make up its mind what to do, and while meditating on the subject the redoubts were lost.

It is true, as I have already stated, that General Kriloff took the responsibility of sending a regiment which had made the unsuccessful assault of the day before, and which was reduced from 2,600 to 1,000 men, a regiment utterly unfit to go into action; and even it arrived too late. It is likewise true that a fresh regiment was sent, which arrived an hour after the redoubts were lost, and thus just in time to assure the retreat. But sending these regiments, even had they arrived in time, was a mistake. They would, of course, have enabled Skobelev to hold the redoubts a few hours longer; but this would only have resulted in a still greater loss of men, without any object. Unless it was intended to continue the attack from this side, the redoubts should have been abandoned as soon as the attack failed on other points, for holding them these twenty-four hours resulted in a loss of some 4,000 men. If, on the contrary, it was intended to continue the attack from this side, then a division, and not a regiment, should have been sent to Skobelev. The whole plan of attack was a mistake; but there is little doubt that the attack, having been begun, might have been, and should have been, continued the next morning. The line of defence had been broken in two places. Had the Russians concentrated all their strength on these two points early next morning, and renewed the assault with vigour, they would, in my opinion, have carried the place. Their loss would have been fearful, but the army of Osman Pacha would have been destroyed, and the way would have been open to Adrianople. As it is, 15,000 men have been lost, and, because they have been lost, the Russians are not quite so near Adrianople as they were before.

All the mistakes of the campaign have been repeated in miniature in the attack upon Plevna, with a fidelity which

to have learned in school. In the first place they should know that artillery fire, to be effective against such positions, should be directed, not against earth, but against men. Now, the four days during which the Russians shelled the Turkish positions they never once advanced their infantry. The consequence was that the Turks were not obliged to advance theirs. They kept their troops stowed comfortably out of the way of the shells, and only put them forward when they saw the Russians were preparing for the assault. Naturally the Russian shell-fire did them very little harm, and for all the effect it had upon the result, they might as well have made the assault the first day. The Russian infantry should have been advanced as if to attack, this would have compelled the Turkish infantry to occupy their trenches where they would have been exposed to the fire of the Russian shrapnel. I do not believe much in modern artillery anyhow, except where the fire of a large number of guns can be concentrated on a small space, but if it is to be of any use at all, it must be by directing it against men and not heaps of earth.

With the recapture of the redoubts taken by Skobelev the attack upon Plevna ended. Up to that moment there was still a hope that the attack might be continued, and that success might finally crown so many heroic efforts. The Russians had taken three strong positions could they get two or three more equally important Plevna would inevitably be theirs. There seems to have been some idea of renewing the attack, for Skobelev, I am told on Wednesday afternoon was requested to hold his position a few hours longer, even after he had reported several times that the place was untenable. Only a few hours longer! When men were going down by the hundreds, and companies and battalions under the terrible fire of the Turks were shrivelling up like green leaves in a furnace flame.

The melancholy part of it is, that generals who send men by the thousand to perish under fire have themselves no idea of what fire is. They have no grip of the battle, no feel of the fire and they have no other way of discovering that a position is untenable, or a line of resistance too strong but in seeing their soldiers in flight after having performed perhaps prodigies of heroism and of valour. So Skobelev was requested to wait a few hours while the headquarter staff would reflect on the situation. The redoubts taken by Skobelev as well as the redoubt of Grivie the other positions might have been attacked with success. Skobelev asked for reinforcements, but not to hold the redoubt, for so

upon one or two important points. An inferior force, skillfully handled, will often suffice to beat a much superior force, and the Russians who had, when we consider the advantages of the position held by the Turks, an inferior force or power, should have endeavoured to make up for this by concentration against one or two points, only making at the same time demonstrations on the whole line. This would have given them the required numerical superiority on the given points. In a conversation I had with Skobelev before the battle, he agreed with me that the plan of a general attack was a mistake, and the result proved it. Had the attack been confined to the Grivica redoubt and the redoubts on the Loftcha road, and demonstrations made by Krüdener and Kriloff, instead of those furious attacks, repulsed in such a bloody manner, the loss incurred by Krüdener and Kriloff would have been avoided, and the 9th and 4th Corps would have been fresh for the renewal of the attack next day on the points of the Turkish line which gave way.

The plan of a general attack was in short the reproduction in miniature of the general plan of the campaign,—instead of concentration, the distribution of forces already too small. That the Russian staff should have adhered to this plan, and should still adhere to it after the repeated disasters of Plevna, shows that they are simply incapable of profiting by the lessons of the war, and that the Russians, with one of the best armies in the world, will be beaten as long as the present staff remains in command, by what may be technically considered one of the worst.

In my opinion there are, besides the plan of a siege and starvation, two ways of taking such a place as Plevna. The first is the plan of an assault, made with about three times as many men as the Russians had in the last affair, that is about 120,000, and handled in the manner of Skobelev by hurling them against the positions, brigade after brigade, until by mere force of momentum and bravery they sweep everything before them like the waves of a rapidly rising sea. The loss to be incurred in such a plan is fearful, but the loss of the enemy would be greater still, for the reason that wherever there is a crossing of bayonets, the beaten side must be simply annihilated. Had the Russians attacked Plevna in this manner, they would have lost 30,000 men, but the army of Osman Pacha would have been destroyed. Not 5,000 would have escaped to tell the tale.

The other plan is more slow, and perhaps not more sure, but it requires a far smaller force for its execution. It is that of advancing by means of flying saps—narrow shallow trenches,

shows how little the headquarter staff have profited from previous blunders. Their first intention was to await the arrival of the Guard before beginning the attack, and unless they had adopted the plan I had already sketched out, of abandoning the line of the Jantra, and making a rapid concentration of the whole force of both armies upon Plevna, this was the only possible thing to do, for to attack Plevna with less than one hundred thousand men was simply folly. Suddenly it occurred to them, that if they waited for the arrival of the Guard they would be thrown into another campaign. This was a consideration that might have occurred to them at first, and which should have necessitated a complete change in the whole plan of campaign. When it finally did occur to them, it resulted in a spasmodic fit of energy and this last attack upon Plevna. But instead of bringing together a force sufficient for the purpose, that is, a hundred thousand men, they hurriedly scrape together what they could without interfering with the army of the Czarewitch, and make the attack with 65 000 bayonets in the forlorn hope of taking Plevna, and thus being able to reach Adrianople this year.

It was a forlorn hope only, and not even General Levitsky believed in success. It was a plan that did not merit success, and it was only the unexpected valour of the Roumanians—an element nobody had counted upon, the sublime bravery of the Russian soldier, and the splendid dash and generalship of Skobelev, that ever made the result doubtful for a moment. I know that the forces brought up during this last attack have been estimated at a hundred thousand, but I also know that the estimate is greatly exaggerated. I know that the whole force of General Zotoff, up to the time of the arrival of the 2nd and 3rd Divisions, did not amount to 30,000 men, that these two divisions between them, after the loss incurred by the second in the affair of Loftcha, did not add an effective of more than 15,000 men, thus making the Russian force 45,000. As to the Roumanians, I know that their army is estimated at 32,000 men—on paper—but, when you deduct from this the cavalry, the sick, the men detached for guarding communications and for various other duties, and last, but not least, the difference between the complement on paper and the actual number of bayonets, their effective did not give more than 20,000—or 65,000 bayonets in all.

The attack, therefore, was made in the first place with an insufficient number of troops, for the Turks had an equal or perhaps a greater number. But the question is not in war to have a numerical superiority upon every point, but to have it

card-tables by the trumpet of war, they rise, rub their eyes, look round them completely bewildered, and are as thoroughly out of the current of modern war as if they had been asleep for forty years. Not even Rip van Winkle, with his rusty gun dropping to pieces after his long sleep, was more bewildered and lost than the majority of these poor old generals suddenly thrown into the campaign at the heads of their brigades, divisions, and corps.

It may be asked why the Emperor does not send these old dotards back to their card-tables, and replace them by younger men and men of talent, of which, after all, the Russian army is not destitute. Well, in the first place, there is the tradition, according to which no functionary must be removed or disgraced as long as it can be helped—from some absurd idea that the prestige of the Government would suffer. The Government would be acknowledging its own fallibility. The result is that the Government, instead of renouncing, assumes the responsibility of all the stupidity, of all the idiocy, all the perversity, and all the dishonesty of the functionary. Then it must be confessed, the kind heart of the Emperor has much to do in retaining these old incapables in their positions. He cannot bear the idea of depriving an old, and as he considers a faithful, public servant of his position, and thus disgracing him, and so unconsciously prefers to sacrifice the lives of thousands of brave fellows to this misplaced feeling of kindness.

One more fact while I am on the subject, illustrative of the way things are managed in the Russian army, for which the headquarter staff must be held responsible. At the time of Suleiman Pacha's attack upon the Shipka Pass, although the pass had then been in the hands of the Russians for something like six weeks, the plan of the pass and positions had not been made. This is a fact which, for military men, speaks volumes. And yet such men as these have dared to take the direction and command of an army of 300,000 men. It is simply madness.

The following letter treats of the posture of military and political affairs in October, as seen from a Turkish point of view :—

∴ CONSTANTINOPLE, *October 7th*.—It was officially announced on Wednesday that Suleiman Pacha is to replace Mehemet Ali as the Serdar Ekrem, or Commander-in-Chief. Every one has been trying to guess the reason why Suleiman is thus honoured. That Mehemet Ali would be removed has been

rapidly constructed under cover of night, or a heavy rifle fire. A man can, with a shovel in ordinary ground, and stimulated by an enemy's fire, put himself under cover in three minutes, and he will make himself a comfortable rifle-pit in five. Give the Russian army shovels, and they will dig their way into Plevna in a week at the outside. The trouble is, that while in the Roumanian army every two men out of three have shovels, in the Russian army there are only five hundred shovels to the division, or about one to every twenty men, and thus in a war against the Turks, which the whole military history of the Russians might have taught them was destined from the first to become a war of sieges, a kind of war in which the shovel plays a no less important rôle than the rifle! This plan I have every reason to believe was under discussion, and had to be laid aside owing to the want of shovels.

So far it must be acknowledged that the Turkish generals have shown far more skill in the conduct of the campaign than the Russian. Their plan consists simply in placing their soldiers in trenches and supplying them with cartridges, bread, and rice. But true generalship after all consists, not in plan by a theoretical army, but in the required ends. In this, which is the essence of generalship, the Turks have excelled, and they have taught a bitter lesson to the French generals, who during the late war with Germany showed their incapacity, and not only their incapacity, but their unwillingness, to fight with anything but the army of their dreams.

I have spoken of Russian generals in a previous letter, and I may add another reason to the ones I then gave for the want of capacity and talent displayed among them. In the first place, all those high in command are very old men. They are men who studied the military art forty and even fifty years ago, since which time the science of war has undergone most important changes and developments—a revolution, in short. In addition to this, they are men who, for the most part, never look in a book, and who rarely read a newspaper, and appear to be utterly oblivious of the march of progress and of science, especially in the military art. Their whole lives may be said to have been passed in one occupation, their whole minds, whatever they ever had, concentrated on one object, and that one of the most trivial to which the human mind can descend—card playing. They have done nothing else, thought of nothing else, for years. Their minds have rusted until they are as dull, as heavy, and as incapable of receiving new impressions as the veriest clodhopper. Called from their

merchants, as well as foreigners, can get no money out of the Government for goods which they have supplied.

These are the incidents, in great part the natural incidents, of war; and, provided the war should be successful, would be borne usually by a people as inevitable ills worth bearing for the sake of the benefits which were to be derived from the struggle. But among the Turks themselves there is the feeling that the war, beyond preventing their immediate destruction, or causing a lessening of their territory, can only be disastrous. As one of the most thoughtful among the Turks said a few days ago:—"We know that Europe will never allow us to increase our territory, no matter what our success. Servia, Roumania, Montenegro, and Greece, can never again be added to Turkey, be our success what it may. The struggle, too, is between us and the rest of the inhabitants of the Empire. We have to supply all the fighting men; and the thousands who have already been killed are a terrible drain on the fighting population of the Empire."

The Turks themselves feel that it is, to say the least, very improbable that at the end of the war they will be in a better position, even though they win, than they were before the war began. England, it is clear, or nearly so, is not going to help them, and every victory they gain is so much loss merely to preserve the *status quo* of their country before the war. They, too, have an inkling, I fancy, of what M. Thiers meant when he said, that he had more dread of Russia defeated than of Russia defeating. Let me say also, in passing, as I have often said before, that none of the inhabitants of European Turkey wish to call Russia master. The argument I have often used from the analogy of the hatred of Greece towards Russia is sound—that if the Christians of the Empire were decently governed, or, better still, governed themselves, they would be hostile to Russia too. Roumania and Servia are the tools, willing or unwilling, of Russia, because their dread of being absorbed by Turkey overcomes their dread of being annexed by Russia. Take away the first, as Europe did for Greece, and the latter becomes at once prominent. Russia defeated means Russia making the war one of life or death, and playing the game of sacrificing man for man.

Turks know that by Russia warfare has always been conducted with an almost wanton disregard of life, and that she has always shown herself a dogged and an obstinate enemy. If the war is to be conducted through one, or two, or three more campaigns, such as that which is now drawing to a close, while the drain of men upon Russia will be terrible, it will be proportionately very much greater upon the Turks. Russia,

considered probable for several days. He has not shown himself specially active, nor displayed remarkable military ability, and no doubt failed signally in the action of the 21st ult. Above all he is of Gourko origin, and unless he could have been uniformly successful, he was pretty sure to arouse the jealousy of the generals under him. But that Suleiman should be his successor is difficult to understand.

Suleiman is not a coward, nor is he destitute of energy. But his previous services are not of a kind one would have thought to warrant his promotion to the most important post in the Turkish army.

altogether incapable

his own. When he

Gourko he pushed on rapidly to the front and made the successive attempts to force the Shipka Pass which your readers know so well. But both in Montenegro and in the Shipka his one great rule in war seems to have been to pound away at whatever opposed him, whether an army or a stone wall. If the war between Russia and Turkey is to be conducted on the pounding principle, and each party is ready to sacrifice any number of men, provided that the enemy can be made to lose at least an equal number, there can be little doubt, I fancy, which army will soonest be exhausted. In Montenegro and at the Shipka, Suleiman can hardly have lost less than 40,000 men, and these beyond a doubt among the best soldiers which the Sultan possesses—war, in fact, under him has been mere butchery.

Notwithstanding the successes of the Turks at Plevna, the depression in the capital during the past fortnight has been very great. It is noticed as a significant fact, that Turkish consolides have fallen whenever there has been a report of a Turkish victory, and have risen when on the contrary the telegraph has given us news of a Turkish defeat. It is not merely that the Christians of the capital—Greeks, Armenians and Bulgarians alike—have no stomach for the war, that was to be expected, nor is it only that the stoppage of commerce with Russia has put an end to the Black Sea trade, upon which a considerable portion of the population of the capital lives, that the increased taxes upon an impoverished people have brought thousands to the verge of starvation, that the large masses of Government officials—most of whom are Turks—have been unpaid for months, and have had all of them to submit to very large reductions in their salaries, that the issue of *caimé* or paper money, has reduced the earnings of boatmen, porters, and day labourers generally to nearly half what it was before the war, and that native

Turkey can produce, but form as good material for making soldiers as any in the world. Many of them are mountaineers, all of them have been inured to hardship, and have, indeed, known little else. Most of them come from the occupations of the country rather than from those of towns, and even those who have lived in the towns have been porters or boatmen, or camel-drivers, or engaged in some other out-of-door occupation, which has helped to make them strong and hardy. The great majority are agriculturists, and as shepherds or farm labourers have been used to roughing it. They have moreover all been trained more or less to the use of arms. The result of their previous training is, that men who have not been put into uniform before have been converted into fair soldiers after a few days' drill, and when sent to the front have proved cool soldiers and good shots. The very want of success which the Turks everywhere encounter when brought face to face in business with keen Arabs or Greeks or Armenians, has driven the Turks, or kept them, to the land and to occupations which are the best training for such soldiers as the Turkish Government has need of. The result has been that the successes gained lately have been such as could not have been foreseen by those who judged only from the failures I have mentioned. The mountaineers of Anatolia and Armenia have done that which their co-religionists from European Turkey entirely failed to do. These men will, I apprehend, stand a winter as well as Russians. What the Syrians and Egyptians will be able to do remains to be seen.

We are now in the midst of the month of Ramazan. One of the five precepts of the Mohammedan religion is the keeping of this month as a fast. It is kept strictly except, I believe, by soldiers, who are permitted by Moslem law to disregard it. The Turkish day consists of the evening and the morning; in other words, lasts from sunrise to the following sunset. During this period in the whole of the month of Ramazan no true believer either eats, drinks, or smokes. The result is that a very much smaller amount of business is transacted during this month than during any other of the year. Eating commences at sunset, and is usually followed by a certain amount of festivity, after which come a few hours' sleep. In the Turkish quarters, two hours before daylight, the rattle of harsh drums, accompanied by harsher voices, and the sound of nondescript instruments, awakes the faithful to the fact that the time has come to eat enough to last them until sunset. This meal is concluded just before the sunrise gun, and then the faithful again betake themselves to sleep. Practically

lankrupt, will even then only be in the condition in which Turkey has been for the last two years. Unless, therefore, Europe interferes, the endurance of Russia is likely to be far greater than that of Turkey, and the terms which will be exacted by her heavier than those which she would have required had the war been finished this autumn. Such, I believe are the opinions of the most thoughtful among the Turks, among whom I would class the Sultan himself, who is reputed to have been always opposed to the war, and who deeply feels the enormous sacrifices which have already had to be made, and the small amount of benefits which can be derived therefrom.

Yesterday's Turkish papers announce that the Government has decided to call out all the remaining reserves which have not yet been summoned. Most of us were under the impression that this had already been done, but it is asserted that there are yet 160,000 men who can be added to the army. The redifs or militia have long been called out, including a large body of men who have served their terms in the army. Those who remain, the mustafez, and who are said to form so large a body, are the Landsturm or last reserve. When it is remembered that the Turkish army comprises the whole of the male Moslem population between certain ages, it may be understood how terrible is the drain upon the population of which I have spoken. That which makes the matter worse, not only for the Turks, but for the country, is that while the Christian villages may have a redundant population, or may at least be able to spare a considerable number of men, nearly the whole male population of hundreds of Moslem villages has thus been taken away. Harvests are neglected, cultivation is at a standstill, and the deepest distress prevails in many places, because the whole of the bread-winners are away.

In estimating the surprises of the war, the fact should be taken into account that the failure of the Turks in putting down the insurrection in Bosnia

Montenegro, and to a less extent a failure with Turks drawn

With the exception of a not very large detachment from the district round about Beyrout, the Turkish army eighteen months ago was hardly recruited at all from Asiatic Turkey. After the beginning of the war with Russia, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt were drawn upon for a supply of men. The Egyptians may be dismissed, since by all accounts they are worth little as soldiers, even during a summer campaign, and in winter will probably be worth still less.

The men from Asia Minor are not merely the best soldiers

been taken under the Sultan's protection, whatever that may imply, and are to be cared for at the expense of the State. Great anxiety was manifested amongst the British colony on the accident becoming known, as several Englishmen in the Ottoman service are employed in the neighbourhood. Only one Englishman, however, was near the spot at the time, and he was not seriously wounded. The sufferers are mostly Mussulmans and Armenians. I happened to be on the Marmora at the time, and not more than three miles from the mills, which are on the sea shore. My attention was suddenly aroused by a sound which startled all on board the small steamer by which I was a passenger, for we took it to be an explosion on board. This was almost immediately followed by another, and then again by two others in rapid succession. Men and women ran to and fro in an excited state for an instant, half expecting to find themselves blown up. Some of the passengers on the bridge had, however, seen the explosion on shore, and the word was at once passed that the powder factory had blown up. We then all saw a huge pear-shaped mass of smoke shooting up into the sky, and knew that we were safe. I learn at the last moment from a medical man who had just returned from the spot, and who was there yesterday shortly after the accident, that there were probably not less than 150 persons killed. Though he was among the first to arrive after the accident, many bodies had already been hurried into hastily prepared graves, and at one containing Armenians a service was being as hastily read over by an Armenian priest.

The following letter, which appeared yesterday in the *Stamboul*, is from Ali Suavi Effendi, who is at the head of the chief Turkish college here:—

“I have received many letters. Some ask me to preach in the Mosque of Sheik Zadé-Bachi; others to give my appreciation of the situation. I am going, therefore, to give you my appreciation on this subject, because next week may witness great events. All my appreciations of European policy may be summed up in the following words. [The italics are in the original]:—*The source of every political evil, of every crime, is the English Government.* Those who can understand this phrase will have no difficulty to overcome. In Europe there is no policy, there is no justice, there is no humanity. These words I have not taken from any book, nor from the newspapers. I have studied the events, and it is the events themselves that have inspired me. Neither must it be believed that I thus expressed myself against my friends who are in Europe, and who can have no

they are good for nothing in the way of work during the rest of the day

This fact is recognized and in the public offices and in the law courts there is a general suspension of business as Turkish officials like other mortals, are incapable of work upon an empty stomach. In justice, however to the poorer class of of Turks, I ought to add that they manage to do a fair share of hard work, even during Ramadan. I have seen woodcutters whom either good will or necessity has compelled to work during these days, notwithstanding the fact that they could not even take a draught of water, while the perspiration was streaming from every pore. It was impossible not to feel kindly towards these poor fellows as they asked, time after time how they rolled up their lon have gun (Turkish time) announced that the sun had sunk below the horizon

Yesterday morning, at about ten o'clock, four very loud and almost simultaneous explosions greatly alarmed the inhabitants of this city and the vicinity, and all sorts of rumours were immediately afloat as to the cause. The utmost excitement prevailed crowds of people congregated in almost every street, and many of them were pale with terror. The explosions were caused by a -- the Government

explosion of some grains of powder while the stone used in working the powder was turning. The four mills were in a moment destroyed, and a great number of lives variously estimated at from 50 to 200 were lost. It is impossible as yet to ascertain the precise number, but I fear that the latter is more likely to be nearer the truth. A great quantity of machinery and powder was destroyed though the Turkish Government estimates the loss at only £10 000, and says that it feels confident that the loss can be repaired within a fortnight at the latest. The Imperial cartridge manufactory is close by the scene of the explosion and had that building also blown up the loss to the Government at the present moment would have been almost irreparable. The greatest promptitude was exhibited in hurrying to the rescue of the sufferers. The medical staff of the Stafford house Committee instantly proceeded to the scene of the accident. The Government has already given orders for the immediate reconstruction of the mills, and the wounded have

already done, at Galata Serai. You must, therefore, attentively read and understand these lessons."

The only importance which can be attached to this letter arises from the fact that it comes from the Director of the Imperial Lyceum. Even the last paragraph is not so absurd as it seems.

While the Russian army had done so little to distinguish itself either in Europe or Asia, and the small Black Sea fleet could not venture to put to sea, many feats of individual officers showed what might be expected of the Navy under more favourable circumstances. The expedition described in the following letter, most merciful in its object, was made at a time when fast and powerful Turkish ironclads held unchallenged possession of the Black Sea.

SEBASTOPOL. *September 11th.*—I returned yesterday from the expedition which I told you the *Vesta* and *Vladimir* were about to undertake. The result has been most successful, and at the same time bloodless. Considering the danger of the voyage, and the skill with which Captain Baranoff has executed it, I think it will be allowed to equal anything in the history of blockade running.

We left Sebastopol at midnight yesterday week, the *Vesta* leading as senior. Every light had been carefully covered, and even the port-holes of our cabins plastered over with felt, so as to exclude any possibility of a gleam of light discovering our whereabouts to the enemy. Our vessel was painted a bluish grey, so like the colour of the sea that at a hundred yards it was barely distinguishable. In this phantom guise, on one of the darkest nights that can be imagined, we glided in silence into the open sea; the only sounds being the steady throb of our screw, and about every ten minutes the call of the officer on watch to the men stationed in the foretop. This call, which for eight days and nights has never ceased, will long remain impressed on my memory. "Foretop, keep a good look-out," still rang in my ears, as last night, for the first time during a week, I slept for more than an hour at a time.

When clear of the land the captain informed us of our destination, which was Kertch. This port has not been entered since the war began, and though, of course, the movements of the Turkish fleet are only to be conjectured from telegrams, the captain told me he fully expected to have a battle before arriving, for several ironclads were supposed to be in that

knowledge of what I write While I was in Europe I told them, "You don't know, you don't understand" Many men read, but few understand and me ten men able to understand, and all the difficulties will disappear To make the English understand their ignorance would benefit everybody, but especially the Ottomans This is why I don't give up my correspondence with Englishmen They say, "England ought to help us, she has not done so, and she will not do so What do these words mean? Where is England and what is she? I have studied England, therefore I know well that all the evils from which the world suffers come from the English Government I believe that if England reforms herself the world will equally reform itself If the English, cause of every ill, were really bad people, I would not trouble about them, they are good enough, but the reason why they are the tools of Russia is ignorance England cannot make war, for she possesses nothing England possesses altogether 12,000 cavalry, she has only 6,000 horses England does not possess more than fifty ironclads, seven only can make war Her mines of coal and of iron, &c, are used up The manufactories of England are cut out by those of Brussels England is henceforth a porter (hamal), who, in order to live, must carry goods and merchandise from one to another Why has England fallen so low? England has plunged herself into the abyss of debt in order to aggrandise Russia England has attempted the dismemberment of Turkey and of three other States in favour of Russia and of herself England has undergone very material losses The knowledge which I possess upon these attempts is drawn from English official documents If these documents had attracted your attention you would have comprehended too These documents are printed but you and the English don't understand If ignorance were blotted out from England the blood of thousands of men leaving thousands of orphans and widows would not have been shed, and milliards would not have been added to the national debt It is necessary to say that our conduct, if it does service to the Ottoman Empire, will also render service to the rest of the world—that is to say, with our wish to put the whole world in order There are Englishmen who work with us In consequence, and in order to make you understand what I have said, the evils springing from our ignorance will end in order to show the ignorance of those who lend their ears to her declarations—I intend to give lectures, as I have

had been torn down for at least a mile on the southern side of the town, and no signs of our being expected were to be found. About half-a-mile to the north a Russian telegraph officer was engaged in arranging communication with Europe, and he told us there were neither wounded nor unwounded soldiers nearer than Gadahout, a coast village about half-way between Gagri and Sukhum-Kaleh; so, after spending some hours in the vain hope that news would arrive, our captain recalled the boats, and we steamed on to Gadahout, before which interesting village we dropped anchor about half-an-hour previous to sunset.

I will now mention two of the officers of the *Vesta*, whose names, if the war continues, will be public property. The second in command on board the *Vesta* is Prince Galitzin Galovkin. This officer, who is of immense size and strength, is the inheritor of more than one princely title and has also a large fortune. When the war broke out he rejoined the navy and was appointed to his present position. His escape from death during the late battle is almost miraculous, and his coolness and courage from beginning to end of that trying five hours were as remarkable as his escape.

At about 10 p.m. on Thursday night lights in front of us and at sea were visible, and we prepared for action. The Prince, as second in command, had determined if an expedition with the torpedo boats became necessary to take the command of it, and now, to all appearance, the hour was come, for even the phosphoric light, indicative of some immense body moving rapidly, was plainly visible, and the order to prepare the torpedo launches went forth. With as little noise as possible these small boats, with their heroic crews, were in the water, and with the Prince as leader they had left for what was very probably a fatal task. As I stood on the bridge trying to make out the arrangement of the expedition, I could hear Galitzin's voice giving his orders as coolly as if he were superintending the capture of a shoal of herrings or sprats, instead of conducting a forlorn hope against perhaps several monster ironclads. The boats had scarcely left the side when the sky darkened and a storm arose. The captain at once recalled the expedition, and under cover of what was now a small tempest we ploughed onward in safety, and for ought I or any one else can tell, we may have passed within 100 yards of the whole Turkish fleet. Next to Prince Galitzin on this expedition should be mentioned the torpedo officer, Eugene Romanovitch, a youth in years, and when off duty the leader in everything savouring of fun and mischief. He speaks English, and we have fraternized greatly.

part of the Black Sea. As the day broke the lovely south coast stood out in all its grandeur. At sunrise we were rushing past Aloupka Castle, whose towers and terraces, flooded in light, contrasted well with the surrounding scenery. Here man has exhausted his ingenuity in rearing a fabric unique and unrivalled, but even this grandest effort of human genius, situated as it is, serves only to mark how insignificant is the work of our hands when compared with that of nature. Towering in the background of the castle, *Al Petri* looks down from a height of 1,500 feet, and seems in its rugged majesty to frown at the toy which the vanity of man has carved for its footstool. On past *Oriandra*, *Livadia*, *Yalta*, and *Massandra*, the *Vesta* and her consort sped. At breakfast time we were half way on our journey, and as the sun was sinking I had the pleasure of congratulating the captain on having successfully accomplished the first step of the expedition, and on our being the first Russian steamer that had entered Kertch since the war broke out.

As the captain told me he should only land for his orders I did not go on shore, and in a few hours the throbbing of the screw and the call to the foretop brought me on deck to find that we were once more on the sullen *Luxine*. The captain now explained to me the object of the expedition. A large number of wounded men were at a place called *Gagri*, not far from *Sukhum Kaleh*, and the admiral had asked *Baranoff* if he would endeavour to embark them and convey them to *Novorossiska* where there was an hospital. The odds were considerably against our ever getting there, much less returning, but brave men do not calculate odds when their comrades are in want of help. If the whole Turkish fleet had been known to be at anchor in *Gagri Bay*, *Baranoff* would only have altered his plans but not his course. His plans at present were to proceed direct to *Gagri*, to offer battle to any single ironclad he met, and if attacked by several to endeavour to escape, failing which he should take to the boats and blow the *Vesta* up. Fortune favours the brave, and after thirty hours of excitement we dropped anchor in *Gagri Bay*.

"Heaven grant we may find all ready for us, was the prayer of the captain as the armed boats left for the shore, a prayer which from the desolate appearance of the place, and the fact that not a soul was visible, I feared would not be granted. As we neared the shore the sign manual of the Turk was plainly to be distinguished. Every house had been burnt to the ground, a few dogs, a cat, and a Cossack boy inhabited or rather perambulated the ruins, the Anglo Indian telegraph

from behind every rock and bush, men who, for the last few minutes had been covering us with their rifles, rushed down to the beach, and the scene as we landed could not easily be described. It appeared that the day before, only some hours previous to our arrival, a Turkish steamer painted grey like ourselves, and doubtless one of the ironclads in search of us, had put into Gadahout Bay, but had left almost immediately. The small Russian detachment, seeing another grey steamer accompanied by a black one arriving about sunset, naturally concluded that it was the Turkish vessel returned with a reinforcement, and consequently when they saw we were landing they all hid themselves. I asked one soldier to show me where he had been hidden, and he took me to a ruined house next door to one I had entered the night before with two sailors. I asked him if he had seen me before. He grinned, did that ingenuous youth, and answered, "kakniett," which may be rendered "rather." The shot; we had heard were fired at us, for it turned out that the felucca was their prize first, and their feelings became too strong for them when they saw what they thought was the Moslem boarding it. We were now informed by the officer that if we returned to Gagri we should find the troops and the wounded all ready for us; so after transferring on board their wounded—I think about half a dozen, and a Turkish prisoner, who evidently found himself in clover—we returned to Gagri, towing the felucca with us for the purpose of utilizing it for the transport of the wounded, &c.

We anchored in Gagri Bay about noon, and now a change had indeed taken place. The martial strains of a band were heard, and on landing we found a force of about 2,000 of as fine-looking fellows as one could wish to see. The shore, which yesterday was desolate, to-day teemed with life; herds of oxen, bullock carts, native conveyances of every description, groups of mountaineers in their picturesque dresses and gipsy-like encampments were visible as far as the eye could reach. The commanding officer had everything ready, not only for the embarkation of about 100 wounded men, but also for that of a battalion of about 600 men, whom the general required transport for as far as Taopse, a march of ten days through the mountain passes, but only about twelve hours by sea. Our captain was quite alive to the danger of crowded decks, but with the usual celerity and silence boats arrive and depart, the mountains of heavy baggage melt away from the landing place, a long file of wounded are carefully accommodated in the felucca which has been forced up against the ricketty old wharf, and in about four hours from the time we anchored

As soon as we had anchored I went on shore with the Prince, our crew, of course, being armed. On landing the only signs of life were some miserable looking curs picnicking on horse bones and sheepskins. Bullock carts, empty boxes, old clothes, &c, were strewed in every direction, but what had been the fate of their owners, or who those owners were, was left to our imagination. A few yards from the wharf a felucca, about thirty feet long, was anchored, but in our anxiety to land we postponed to ourselves the pleasure of visiting it, more especially as we believed the village to be in Russian possession. The houses were only about 100 yards from the shore, and to these we now approached. At the entrance to the main street we found a Russian soldier, who at first we thought was wounded, as he could not speak, and looked dreadfully ill. It happily appeared afterwards that he had only lost the use of his tongue, and not the member itself. We then proceeded to call at several of the houses, but found no one at home, and as it was now getting dark, and we had to visit the felucca, the Prince gave the order to retire. As we were pulling to the felucca we heard firing—first, a few straggling shots, and then a fusillade—but concluding it was some skirmish inland we took no notice, and boarded our prize from both sides. On going below we found it freighted with firearms, and amongst them some very nice repeating rifles of the Winchester system. As it was now nearly dark, the captain recalled us and at once put to sea steering direct for Constantinople. I asked him his reasons, and he told me he felt sure that no ironclads would be looking for him in that direction, and that if he was seen his course would perhaps prevent his being interfered with, the Turks not having yet realized the consummate impudence of these little cruisers.

The captain's clever plan met with complete success, and having given all the ironclads the slip, at about one a.m., he headed again for Gidahout, having determined to make a descent with all the boats and search the place thoroughly. At six a.m. we were at anchor, and now the scene was exciting. A mitrailleuse was mounted in the launch, and about 100 sailors commanded by Prince Galitzin, were ready. The captain's boy, Terracuta, a fine lad of fifteen was armed to the teeth, and giggling with joy as I tumbled into the launch alongside of him, and I verily believe there was not a man left on board who was not hoping that reinforcements would soon be needed. As we approached the shore a few men appeared, at first in rather a hostile attitude, but soon perceiving that we were Russians a wild hurrah was given, and in an instant

can hardly be expected that they will be able to continue to defy with impunity the monster ironclads everywhere on the look-out for them, I think it by no means improbable that before they are sent to the bottom the navy of Turkey may have still further proof that the race is not always to the swift, or the battle to the strong, and that the little cargo-boats of the company will again challenge with success the much vaunted blockade and supremacy of the Black Sea.

CHAPTER XIX.

CRISIS OF THE CAMPAIGN IN ASIA.

The Camp of Mukhtar Pacha—The Turkish Soldier at Prayer—Two Notable Deserters—The Russian Camp—Arrival of Reinforcements—The Battle of October 2nd—Capture of the Great Yagni—Russian Mistakes—Renewal of the Fighting—Preparations for a Grand Attack—General Lazareff's Great Flanking March—The Field Telegraph—The Battle of Aladjä Dag—Complete Overthrow and Flight of Mukhtar Pacha—Large Capture of Prisoners and Guns—Condition of Kars.

HAVING driven the Russians from all the posts they had occupied between Kars and Erzeroum on the one line, and Bayazid and Erzeroum on the other,—having reduced the main body of the Russian army to a defensive position before Alexandropol and compelled its left wing to stand helplessly by while one of the least competent of Turkish commanders actually crossed the Russian frontier in the direction of Erivan,—Mukhtar Pacha had reached the measure of his allotted success. From this time his arrangements began to lose the impress of his former prudence, although weeks were to elapse before their character was to be brought to a decisive test, and to be exposed by his utter and irreparable defeat. The following letters show the course of military events until the Turkish Army was broken in pieces almost under the walls of Kars :—

□ HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF MUKHTAR PACHA, *Sept. 17th.*—Now that Ramazan has arrived, people seem more intent on their religion than on their military exercises. I don't mean to say that the latter are neglected. Mukhtar Pacha, as rigid a

every man was on board, and even the commissariat department had sent the beef and other necessities for the troops. There remains now only to embark the General Shalkoonikoff, who was coming with us and we had to proceed to a place some twelve miles further up the coast to meet him.

The signalman on one of the highest posts on shore now announced the smoke of a steamer to the north of us and the masts of another to the south. With the pleasant prospect of being rammed behind and before, we slipped out of Gagri Bay and were soon enveloped in our usual gloom. About ten p.m. Prince Galitzin went on shore at a place called Sandripsh for the General, and having returned shortly with his Excellency, we steamed on for Taopse arriving about six in the morning, when the disembarking of the troops was carried out with the same admirable ease that distinguished the embarkation. I have had a great deal of experience in embarking and disembarking troops in peace and war time, and in almost all parts of our dominion, but I never saw anything to equal the rapidity and ease with which the Russian overcomes apparently insurmountable difficulties. It must be remembered also that a Russian soldier carries a heavier weight than ours, that he is a larger man, and consequently takes up more space in a boat, and, finally, that the camp equipage of 600 men in its lightest marching order is about as vast as that of an English division under similar circumstances. We left Taopse early in the day and at sunset steamed into Novorossiska where the General and the wounded were landed. After this the work of the gallant little cruisers having been so successfully accomplished we passed for the last time into the open sea and challenged the blockade of the powerful navy of Turkey by sweeping it from the Caucasus to Sebastopol, and from thence to Odessa.

It may be interesting to the admiral in command of the ironclads to learn that the little *Vesta* and her consort have during the last 200 hours steamed over 1807 miles of the Black Sea and during that time they have only twice entered a port—Gagri Taopse, and Gadahout being open roadsteads. Having observed frequent mention of the Russian Black Sea fleet in English papers, and as many of your readers may be under the impression that such a force exists, I will describe it—three old cargo boats of the Russian Steam Navigation Company and the Emperor's yacht none of these are plated or defended by armour, and with the exception of the yacht they might almost serve as lunches to Turkey's powerful ironclads. Their want of armour is however, balanced by the devoted courage of the officers and men and though it

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place of worship, when the Mus-

Religious custom requires that each man has a praying carpet of one description or another, off his shoes as well. One man has a rug, another a goat-hide, a third the skin of a lion, a fourth, mayhap, his jacket; even a fifth has another on which he may kneel.

Thus hurrying to the spot where the Imam stands, a stranger to the place, to imagine them so many persons in their various garments, and taking advantage of the presence of a dealer of Israelitish goods.

The Russians, too, have been lately engaged.

On the 9th ult. we were startled from Karajal, the fortified hill which rests. The Marshal's long brass cannon in position, and every field-glass was turned to the frowning heights along which the smoke-bursts clung in the morning air. We heard the secondary smoke-bursts that showed the shells.

In our advanced positions the parapets were black with eagles.

Only a salute of twenty-one guns was fired on the occasion of the Czar's coronation.

"May Allah be pleased with him," an appropriate Moslem exclamation, was heard.

Russian military calendar the day was discovered and conveyed to the soldiers.

After another blank salute sent to the sky.

This time it was an Imperial birthday, or Czarewitsch, I forget which.

Of the salute had the same Turk fired on the former occasion. Sometimes we heard the firing out in the plain, and on such occasions the fire is apt to take place as the combatants of the guns on either side.

As a rule, the Russians are killed and twice as many as the Moslems are killed in an affair go further.

Three days ago Said Bey, a nephew of the late Bey of Caucasian memory, got known in the desultory fights. He lies in his tomb.

soldier is
most in
ly come
the wild

Moslem as exists in the Sultan's dominions, is too good a soldier to allow that But the interval is well taken up with

worship

At this austere season, from the moment the dawn colours the eastern sky until the Ramazan gun booms out into the evening air, not a morsel of food crosses the lips of the soldiers, not even a drop of water, and over and over again, when, seeing the wistful eye of a trooper turned towards my lighted chibouk, I have proffered my tobacco pouch, it has been motioned away with a self denial worthy of an eremitic of the wilderness And each of the many times a day is the long dawn, wailing cry of the Muezzin rises above the murmur of the camp, soldiers are to be seen hurrying eagerly to prayer as to a banquet, and unhappy seems the man on duty who cannot join the serried rows of worshippers who, in company, sometimes in battalion face toward Mecca and follow the orisons and genuflections of the Imaum who stands before their centre Each man takes his place in the ranks, his hands hanging close by his sides Then he lifts them to his ears as if to shut out all worldly sounds Then he lays them on his knees, and bowing his head forward seems lost in contemplation After a few seconds he sinks to his knees, and leans back upon his heels, and then bowing with his forehead to the earth, exclaims, or rather chants, "Allah Akhbar" (God is great) Three times he thus bows and chants, and then he stands up, bowing forward, chanting three times "La Allah il Allah (there is no God but God) The remainder of the somewhat tedious prayers which follow consists principally, as far as I can make out, of long verses of the "Koran"

In all his simple religious exercises the Turkish soldier is devoutness and attention itself, and it is perhaps most in privacy that this is most apparent I have frequently come unexpectedly upon some rugged soldier in one of the wild, lonely ravines that gash the hillsides around standing before the ragged overcoat which served him for a praying carpet, and going through his rather active religious motions with a zeal which would do credit to the most self conscious Pharisee The stranger who for the first time witnesses the united prayer of Turkish soldiers in camp is considerably puzzled by the selection of heterogeneous articles brought forward to the

nineteen of whom are cavalry, the rest infantry. The history of the formation of this body, designed at its inception to be the nucleus of an imposing force, is curious enough. The men, principally residents in Constantinople, volunteered for the Army of the Danube. Among them was a considerable sprinkling of ex-Austrian and Russian officers, who undertook, by the distribution of Polish revolutionary proclamations, to cause the wholesale desertion of the Polish element in the regiments opposed to them, and subsequently to organize these deserters into a Turko-Polish Legion. For some inscrutable reason the Constantinople authorities decided on inducing this handful of adventurers to come here. They were told that immense numbers of prisoners had been taken, among them several thousand Poles, who were at Trebizond, awaiting officers to organize them. The forty Poles and their two officers at once abandoned the Danube mission and hurried away to Armenia. At Trebizond they were fêted by the inhabitants, and informed that the Polish prisoners and deserters were still at Baiburt. At Baiburt the future legion was believed to be at Erzeroum, and at Erzeroum the authorities had good reason to think that the mass of the prisoners were still at headquarters. Thus the gentlemen composing the unfortunate "nucleus" were led on step by step to the heart of Armenia, where they still remain.

Such is the tale as told to me by the two officers commanding the cavalry and infantry sections of the "nucleus," and confirmed by the statements of their men. They took part in the battles of the 18th and 25th of August, in the latter of which the infantry lost one man killed, and two wounded. Since their advent here they have been busy scattering lithographed revolutionary documents about the field in every locality where Russo-Polish troops might be apt to meet with them, the only fruit secured up to the present being two rather dilapidated-looking Poles, who would in any case probably have taken the first opportunity of coming over. Of course the whole story about the immense band of prisoners awaiting organization was a fable, not a single prisoner of any kind having been taken by the Turks up to that moment. Indeed, from the commencement of the campaign here up to to-day the entire number of prisoners would not exceed a dozen. The Polish nucleus is now on the point of breaking up. The men are dissatisfied with their food, and with their treatment generally. They declare they originally volunteered for the Danube, and only undertook to do exceptional "organizing duty" here during three months. The time has elapsed, and

desertion of the similar element in the opposing army

allies, and to receive with a certain amount of scepticism the wonderful and oft repeated stories of Russian discontent and demoralization they bring us

I have, however, met with a couple of genuine deserters, and that, too, of no inconsiderable rank. One is a Mohammedan Circassian, who, when the Servian war broke out, held the position of aide-de-camp to the Emperor of Russia. A staff officer in the camp here, and who had been for many years one of the Turkish military attachés at St Petersburg, told me he had there been intimate with this Circassian, who had on more than one occasion assured him that in case of war he would take the earliest opportunity of changing sides. He has kept his word, and I see him often in the tent of the etat major, with his splendid uniform of the Russian Circassian Guard—a long tunic of fine white cloth, heavily laced with silver—his belt, sword sheath and hilt, as well as the various pouches and secondary articles such persons think fit to hang around their persons, of magnificently wrought and enamelled silver and gold. The second of these more notable deserters is a person of much greater importance. It is but a few days since he arrived at headquarters, where I saw him in the tent of Mukhtar Pacha. He is called Eeyoub Aga, and comes from the neighbourhood of Erivan. At home his rank is little short of princely. He commands the fighting men of 6 000 families. His brother was a cavalry divisional general in the Russian army, and was killed, or died (as Mukhtar Pacha told me in a significant manner), shortly before the defection of his brother. This Eeyoub Aga passed over to the Turks at Bayazid and thence came on here. He is a tall, gaunt man, with an expression of face very much reminding me of the late Tulu Moussa (bearded Moses), the Persian bandit chief, about whom I have had occasion to write some time since. As a reward for his change of side, Eeyoub Aga has been decorated by the Marshal with the Medjidie of a high class, and has had three other orders given him for his uncle and nephews.

The Polish deserters to the Turkish army are few and far between, notwithstanding the measures taken by their compatriots here to attract them. I dare say it is not generally known that a "Polish Legion" exists as a component part of the Turkish army of Armenia. We have one of forty men,

and well-accounted young men, who, provided they are skilfully conducted, and have not their courage wasted in pitiful skirmishing engagements, are certainly capable of turning the Turks out of any position accessible to human feet. Yesterday His Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Michael paraded them and bade them welcome. He was highly satisfied with the inspection and had reason to congratulate their leaders as well as himself, for they are a body of first rate soldiers.

Everybody is now inclined to predict that a sharp stroke at Mukhtar Pacha's position is near at hand. The Pacha himself seems to be of a similar opinion. He was very busy on Monday about the Kizil Tepe entrenchments, examining them closely and ordering the construction of additional earthworks. I don't doubt that something has been planned here, but I am also led to suppose that nothing definitive has been fixed. As an excuse for the continual frittering away of time, it is alleged that the new chief of staff, General Gurtchine, of whose skill and energy great things are reported, is obliged to study the situation, and to review the links of the complicated chain with which our army is trying to fetter its opponent. What has been done during the course of this summer was little more than a groping in the dark with regard to the enemy's strength and resources, the final knowledge of which has been bought by bitter experience. It may be that the Bulgarian campaign is still absorbing the main interest and solicitude of the Russian Government. For all that it cannot be denied that a decisively victorious campaign here would bring the Russians more easily to Constantinople through Asia Minor than through the Danubian and Balkan stronghold. In Armenia, moreover, Russia has prospects of indemnifying herself for her enormous sacrifices in men and money; but she scorns the chance of acquiring substantial advantages in the hope of rehabilitating her military fame in the European theatre of war. We are thus confined to an otherwise incomprehensible inactivity. We are spellbound to the most objectionable place on earth. The fighting which has gone on has never had a very serious character. The losses sustained during the whole present campaign in dead and wounded do not amount to more than 5,000 men—that is to say, they are of less importance than those of a single day's battle before Plevna. Our soldiers have not been earnestly put to the test yet, although they enjoy the renown of being the very best in all Russia.

In the following letter, the same Correspondent with the

they declare they will disband unless Government keeps to its original promises

What the next move of the contending armies on the frontier will be is hard to say. Neither party shows the least inclination to make a move—at least at the centre. But from either flank come rumours of proximate action. Mukhtar Pacha told me he was informed that the Russians were gradually sending off their heavy baggage from Ardahan, and it is a fact that their troops no longer occupy the town itself, confining themselves to the two commanding forts of Emir Oghlou and Ramazin Oghlou, the capture of which at the commencement of the campaign secured for them the speedy possession of the place itself. Considerable Turkish forces, partly drawn from the Erzeroum garrison, are gradually drawing in that direction, and action of one kind or another seems probable.

The following letter is from the Correspondent in the Russian camp —

△ CAMP KARAJAL, *September 27th* — A more dismal place than that in which our headquarters are established cannot be easily imagined. Death itself must lose its horrors for people condemned to vegetate in such a spot, and so it is not difficult to explain why our officers and men long for a murderous battle, in the hope of getting away from this life wearying site. Instead of pondering here over the achievements which we should be able to accomplish if we had only 20,000 men and 100 cannon more, we ought to try our strength in turning and storming Mukhtar Pacha's position at once. Then we should have a chance of conquering good winter quarters in Erzeroum. There is obviously plenty of room for daring strategy. At all events it seems, at the worst, to be less disadvantageous, and more honourable even, to recede before the Turks after having experienced a loss of some 3 000 men in a determined assault, than before the cold season, with perhaps double that loss. Moreover, defeat is unavoidable in the second case, whereas in the first, if our men have but pluck and our leaders ability, we have more chances of success than of discomfiture.

We are not so weak now as we were months ago, when General Heilmann dashed his head against the rocks of Zevin. Two complete divisions have reinforced us since. At first the 40th arrived, and now we have also the Moscow Grenadiers, the last battalions of which joined our army only three days ago. These new troops are composed of keen looking, well armed,

the task of closing in with the enemy's centre and main force, so as to prevent him from withdrawing his troops from Subatan, in order to reinforce other positions which we intended to take, if possible. To his right, the first division of the Moscow Grenadiers, at General Loris Melikoff's direct disposal, had to act against the Yagni hills. I believe I have stated already in my former letters that Great Yagni, situated about ten miles from our camp, is a very regular conical hill, with a plateau at the top, towering 750 feet over the plains and smooth undulations stretching from Kurukdere to Kars. A direct assault on that hill, which on former occasions had cost the Russians a good deal of blood, was now considered as likely to lead to no good result, and in consequence its capture did not enter into the original disposition.

The real and most important point, according to the views of our staff, against which all our efforts had to be concentrated, was Little Yagni, an entirely isolated, bulky elevation, with a comparatively extensive platform on the top. Though of considerably less height than its namesake, its sides are quite as steep, while a rocky crest, very much like that of the Kizil Tepe, borders its extended summit. This, however, does not consist of a uniform level, but is separated by an intervening flat depression, so as to form three distinct terraces, of which the southern one is about 200 feet higher than the northern. This hill, situated at a distance of about nine miles from Kars and two from the Great Yagni, completely stops the road from Kurukdere to that fortress. It is very probable that the information upon which it had not only been strongly fortified and garrisoned by Turkish infantry, but was also armed with twenty cannon of heavy calibre, was received from spies. The honour of taking by assault this commanding point was conferred upon the 2nd Brigade of the Moscow Grenadiers, under Major-General Count Grabbe, and eight battalions detached from Ardahan for that purpose, under General Komaroff. This gallant officer, who had been slightly wounded on the 25th of August, has since recovered. His fellow-sufferer, General Tshadtchewadze, wounded on the same day, had also reassumed his command of our whole cavalry. Three battalions, which, as a rule, garrison the fortress of Alexandropol, had also been ordered to Karajal, to cover the camp and headquarters, and to form the reserve of the 2nd Brigade of the 70th Division, which, as I have stated above, had nothing to do but to check an improbable offensive movement of the Turks against our left wing opposite the Kizil and the Yagni Tepes.

The general object apparently was to carry out a complete turn-

which was likely to secure victory. Had the infantry been led immediately to the assault in tirailleur lines before the dawn of day, without firing a single round they would have carried that hill, I am sure, within half an hour. In the way the attack was conducted it was obvious that the enemy, who, judging by the number of his tents, had there about 3,000 men, had time to bring all his available means to the defences.

I have not the slightest doubt that the twelve hours' cannonading did no harm whatever to the earthworks, and inflicted only trifling losses on the garrison, for they had for the most part retired to the sides of the hill that were out of range. To our left, the impetuous General Heimann had already hurled his division in skirmishing lines against the Aladjia mountain, and its southern continuation, the Awly-yer hill, separated from it by the upper part of the Subatan ravine. The incessant sharp volleys gave evidence that the Turkish main force had been concentrated there. It was soon clear also that a direct assault on those rocky steeps and terraces, strengthened by numerous entrenchments and stone barricades, had no better chance of succeeding to-day than on previous occasions. Within the first half an hour it was clear that the carefully elaborated plan of operations again combined all the faults of previous tactics, magnified, moreover, by the absence of that dash which, at the beginning of the present campaign, was characteristic of this army.

Some one seems to have suggested, and brought others to believe, that in this breech-loading time an assault by infantry is obsolete and unnecessary, and that all war might, with less effusion of blood, be just as well, or better, done by the artillery alone. Such, unhappily, seems to be the erroneous idea at headquarters. Yet, of all the shells which I have had the opportunity of watching here, fired on our own or on the Turkish side, not a single one caused damage worth the pains and the powder. When they burst in the earth it was at such a depth that their weak charges were unable to overcome its resistance, and, consequently, the fragments did not fly off. They only exploded properly when the shell happened to strike on a rock or other hard substance. I have not even heard that a single one of our soldiers has been killed by the famous shrapnels, which, at all events, are much more efficacious than simple grenades. At ridiculous distances of above three miles they, too, are likely to produce little more than an innocent shower of leaden drops. Anyhow, artillery alone is not capable of dislodging such stubborn soldiers

ing movement on both hostile wings, either to surround Mukhtar Pacha entirely or to cut off his communication with Kars. Could this have been effectually managed, no doubt he would have been compelled to surrender with his army within a few days, for, his supplies of ammunition and provisions being in danger of immediate exhaustion, he must either have broken through the Russian lines, or tried to make his way with disbanded troops across the Russian territory, in the hope of joining his comrade, Ismael Hakkı Pacha, who is still entrenched before Igdyr.

After this explanation, let me come to the events which I witnessed in following General Loris Melikoff's staff. The troops ordered for the advance started from their camps at eight o'clock in the evening of the 1st inst. At three o'clock precisely the next morning we followed, riding at a moderate speed, to the south-west on a country track over the vast plain. Our way was lit by the waning moon and countless stars shining with intense brilliancy. A cold wind made our trip by no means pleasant, as it brought the temperature near to the freezing-point. The staff consisted of about fifty persons—general officers, aides de camp, and servants—escorted by three sotnias of Cossacks from the Caucasus, not armed with lances, but accoutred and dressed like genuine Circassians. The ground, in appearance almost level, is in fact cut through at intervals by a few rocky ravines, between which the long-stretching undulations rising gradually towards the south. After two hours and a half of wearisome riding, we arrived at dawn of day at an eminence some 150 feet above the flat-topped ridge of the rising ground called the Kaback Tepe (Pumpkin Hill).

Hitherto no reports of firearms had reached us. But from the top of this commanding point, at half-past five, sharp and general firing suddenly struck our ear. To our right and left the roar of the cannons, and the sharp, dry, knocking, rattling of the musketry came down, sounding in the distance like the noise produced by the work of some hundred road-makers, breaking flint-stones in a re-echoing hall. The principal object of attack, the Little Yagm, rising now clear in sight, frowned over the plains of Kars like an impregnable fortress. Its summit was surrounded with breastworks, ditches, rifle-pits, and blinded batteries. The Moscow Grenadiers and the Ardahan Division were already supposed to be at work. I say supposed, because in fact they were not. On seeing from the Kaback Tepe some forty guns firing with a range of three miles, at earthworks which were prudently left empty by the Turks, it seemed to me that the attack lacked the character

had entirely occupied the impregnable hill, and were waving joyously their caps and muskets.

While this was being accomplished, the indifferent cannonading on the right, between our batteries and those on the Little Yagni, was still going on. It might have continued for a century, and nothing would have come of it. As soon as it became evident that the men on the top of Great Yagni were genuine Russians and not Turks, as some of us still supposed, the staff rode off in order to inspect the conquered position, and to decide the further course of operations now possible through so brilliant a beginning. The hill was rather too steep for our horses, and we rode round it to the right, over the plain two miles wide which separates it from Little Yagni. What in the world had we to do with that Little Yagni? Had it been blocked up after the defeat of Mukhtar Pacha's main army, its defenders must have surrendered within three days from want of water. The opinions on that point were unanimous among all the officers. The task of shutting in the garrison of Kars—at the utmost 6,000 men—ought to have been entrusted to a single brigade, which might have occupied and fortified the heights contiguous to Great Yagni, and opposite to Little Yagni. When our staff passed by, one of our infantry regiments had already been deployed in skirmishing order, and was engaged with that garrison. Besides, strong bodies of our numerous cavalry, commanding that plain, challenged in vain the Turkish irregular horsemen. All their ferocious Circassians, disgusted on account of their receiving neither pay nor food, had left Mukhtar's camp in a wholesale desertion a fortnight ago. Only worthless, cowardly Kurds remained for the sake of murder and plundering.

All of a sudden the Turkish heavy battery on the top of Little Yagni changed its mark. Cutting the air with portentous howling, a well-aimed shell struck in the very midst of the squad of Cossacks forming our vanguard, throwing the earth high up. A horse with empty saddle sprang about bewildered, but his stunned rider, recovering his senses, caught him, quickly mounted, and joined his troop at a gallop. Old General Loris Melikoff, keeping his horse in the same steady pace as before, did not seem to care for such trifles as shells and the stray rifle-bullets humming around us. Taking the lead of his staff, with his green Mohammedan standard embroidered with red inscriptions in Arabic letters flying before him, he gave an example of cold-blooded courage to his officers. Almost immediately a shell whizzed by and struck the ground, bursting some twenty yards behind our party.

as the Turks are from the bottom of their deep rifle pits. Further discussion on the subject would be preposterous in the face of a series of experiments which are everywhere conclusive in favour of my assertion.

Our cannon still boomed at the rocks and the earth while masses of infantry were either idling as reserves in the depressions of the ground or were employed in a disastrous but useless skirmishing with the enemy. For hours each tirailleur lay behind a heap of stones which he had previously piled up for his shelter and took a deliberate aim at some similarly protected adversary. Such fighting only kills and wounds, without the hope of a useful result. At six o'clock in the morning this state of things was on both wings as clear as the rising sun whose rays gilded the glorious white crown of Mount Ararat. In the centre before us stood three miles off cutting the blue sky with its regular conical profile Great Yagm. It covered the front of Mukhtar Pasha's centre and left wing commanding the plain before them and enjoyed the reputation of impregnability since at different times various Russian assaults on its steep slopes had been repulsed with considerable loss. From its foot to its top it was covered with rifle pits and ditches in three superposed rows cut in conformity with the configuration of the ground in projecting and re-entering angles.

The prospects of success there appeared indeed so very poor that it was considered by the Russian staff useless to attempt the conquest of that natural fortress. Therefore only a demonstration supported by a brigade and two batteries was intended.

From the greater hill we found that its garrison was exceedingly feeble. The breastworks on its base and its middle were not manned at all and even the fortifications bordering the top plateau were only very insufficiently armed as was proved by the spasmodic and uncoordinated rifle firing and the apparent absence of cannon. On learning this General Loris Melikoff ordered a general assault on the hill. From three sides the troops advanced merrily in skirmishing lines with supports and reserves cheering as they passed their commanding General who spoke to them some encouraging words. The cannons redoubling their firing flung shrapnel after shrapnel to the top. An hour afterwards the whole hill was swarming with grenadiers who steadily climbed up its steep slopes despite the frantic firing of its defenders. At eight o'clock the Turkish battalion on the summit of the Great Yagm had ceased to exist. Our men

valley, from which a road, cut in zigzags, leads to the summit of Great Yagni. Victory turned her smiling face towards the Russian commander, but he disdained the opportunity, and listened to General Heimann's opinion.

Opposite Great Yagni runs a high barren ridge, sloping gradually upward to a flat-topped summit called the Awly-Yer, which is severed from the Aladja Mountain by the Subatan ravine, about two miles above the village of Hadji Veli Koi. This commanding point—the most important of the whole Turkish position, and subsequently well fortified—was literally inaccessible from the plain at the foot of the Aladja, towards which it falls off some 1,500 feet in a succession of steep gradients and perpendicular rocks. At its base the Turks had concentrated their main force; and Mukhtar, relying on the strength of Great Yagni, had neglected to occupy with the necessary troops the summit of the Awly-Yer. This fact had been ascertained by our cavalry patrols. Two squadrons of Cossacks had even remained for two hours at Veli Koi, a village situated to the south of that elevation, right across Mukhtar's only line of retreat, where they met not a single Turkish soldier. The Pacha, moreover, was utterly unable to send a sufficient force quickly enough to the Awly-Yer, because he was closely pressed in front by the 2nd Brigade of the Caucasian Grenadiers, under Major-General von Schack, a Prussian by birth and education. Six of our battalions had just descended the Great Yagni, six others were near at hand, and had they been momentarily withdrawn from the superfluous attack on the Little Yagni, it is probable that they would have taken the Awly-Yer almost without loss from the side of its totally unoccupied southern ridge. Possibly such movements did not enter the original plan; but plans are worthless when the fighting has once begun, and all depends on the capacity to seize favourable opportunity.

It seems that General Loris Melikoff asked an officer whether he knew the road to Vezin Koi. The Awly-Yer was obviously the only tactical object worth storming at any cost; it was the magic point from which the fate of the day was suspended by a thread. Its occupation by the Russians would have unavoidably led to the destruction of Mukhtar Pacha's entire army. Its very key, the Great Yagni, was already in our hands. At this moment, unhappily, General Heimann, in an interview with Loris Melikoff, was pleased to assert formally that his troops, advancing from the Subatan plain, were quite able to finish taking the Awly-Yer, as they had done with the Great Yagni, and that, therefore, our available force

Then came another and another, all pressing over us, till at last one fell only five yards off the very centre of our crowd. The officers huddling together nevertheless received the noisy failure with a scornful hurrah.

A few seconds more and another big shell burst right amidst our staff, perhaps only one yard behind General Louis Melikoff's horse. Earth and small stones flew about. For an instant as the foremost part of the crowd disappeared in the dust I thought the commanding General killed. He, however, rode quietly on and smiled, as a somewhat fainter hurrah accompanied the bursting of the iron monster. It had grazed the right side of Lieutenant Petroff's face, and the pressure of the air made him deaf on that side. His cheek became swollen and severe headache ensued. This was the only accident we had to complain of. No other officer was wounded or contused. Some of the horses however were scratched or bruised a little by the earth and the pebbles. The shell itself produced no effect in the middle of such a crowd of horsemen, and the fragments found their grave on the spot where they intended to dig ours. A few minutes afterwards we were out of dangerous range.

As we wheeled round into the valley, 400 yards wide, which separates Great Yagm from the bulk of the Alidja Mountain two regiments of cavalry dashed at full speed into the plain where the Turkish battalions from Kars were engaged with our skirmishers. Of course I expected that they would sweep like an avalanche over that dry level ground and cut down in a gallant charge the enemy's scattered soldiers. As far as I could see no such thing happened. The cautious warriors when the bullets began to tell on them lost much of their pluck and placing their confidence rather in their muskets than their broadswords indulged in a skirmishing entertainment. Afterwards I heard of their achievements and how they had slain hundreds of Nizams and Bashî Bazouks but I had not the good fortune to see this feat of arms. Presently, four Red Cross men carried a man on a litter to the ambulance in the rear. We went up to the patient and discovered that he was not as we thought, a Russian but a wounded Turk. All our soldiers are well acquainted with the fact that the Turks kill torture and mutilate every Russian prisoner, yet they cannot murder in stupid fanatic hatred, a helpless suffering wretch, although the inexorable law of retaliation seems to demand it. All the Turkish prisoners, some 140—wounded and unwounded—were kindly treated and well attended to in my presence. At the time when we had reached about the middle of the

prisoners. About 140 Turks had been taken alive. We learnt from a soldier that the famous Kara Fatima, the Turkish heroine, had met with a fatal end. They said that she lay in one of the captured tents, shot through the heart. Together with an officer I sought her all over the hill, but I did not find her; but some asserted that, on the persistent entreaty of the Turkish prisoners, she had been buried immediately by compassionate Russian soldiers. The number of tents on the hill justified the supposition that it had only been defended by about 450 men. Two Turkish officers were among the dead. One stood still upright in the trenches, leaning over the breastwork, with his right arm stretched out as if in the action of firing a revolver. The other, a stout, obese fellow, lay on his back before his own tent. He had been killed before he had time to get on his coat, which he had slung over his huge shoulders.

We had a magnificent look-out from the Great Yagni over the whole field of battle. Kars, a grey heap of stones, uninviting like the remainder of this melancholy country, rose in sight. From one of its northern detached works—I believe Fort Mouchlis—a monster cannon thundered at intervals, sending its shots in the direction of the Little Yagni. The troops were still wasting their forces against well-armed natural strongholds, when it would have been a comparatively easy thing to cut the army off from their supplies. I cannot account for the persistence with which our General always engages the enemy's whole front line, with the result that we are everywhere too weak, and have nowhere strong reserves at hand which alone are likely to secure victory at the favourable moment. So the battle, very similar to previous ones which had been fought on the same ground, was protracted from hour to hour to no purpose. It was the accustomed style of *tirailleur* engagements at respectable distances, without moving, accompanied by the annoying but harmless noise of 200 cannon. We descended the Great Yagni on the opposite side, resting at an eminence at its foot. As I knew beforehand that nothing would come of our supreme efforts, because the same causes must necessarily bring about the same results, the same faults the same failures, I did not wonder when General Heimann asked for reinforcements, while the Little Yagni blunder neutralized about 16,000 men. At last, in the afternoon, the smoke of cannons was seen on the ridge of the Aladja Dagh itself. It came from General Sholkownikoff's brigade, which had thus succeeded in threatening the rear of Mukhtar Pacha's camp near Subatan; and, in the case of his discomfiture, was ready to prevent his

might be advantageously employed against the Little Yagm and the garrison of Kars. This strange opinion prevailed. General Loris Melikoff's genius was impaired by pernicious advice. His whole staff recognized it, but nobody ventured to utter an objection. General Haumann, of course, did not take the Awly Yer as he had promised in his sanguine fashion but was, on the contrary, repulsed with considerable loss, while the three brigades ordered to assail the Little Yagm had no better chance. Even had we had a reserve of 50 000 men more they too would never have succeeded in the attempt of taking those fortifications and works by assaulting them. This was conspicuous enough at nine o'clock in the morning and the wisest plan would have been then to withdraw the troops for the opportunity had been missed.

The staff turned its back to the Awly-Yer, and followed the zigzags of the road which the Turks had recently made for the convenience of the garrison on the summit of the Great Yagm. Company after company as they passed us descending, cheered the commanding General who wished them good luck. On the hillside as we went up by a young grenadier, moaning as he tried to lift his head and rest on his elbow to answer the questions and receive the consolations of the General. Overcome however by weakness and pain he fell back and shut his eyes while the blood still gushed from the wound in his side. Higher up a dead Turk, stretched across the narrow track on his face compelled us to make a circuit. On reaching at last the level top of Great Yagm a ghastly sight struck our eyes. All the pits and ditches around were filled with the corpses of Turks. The dead were almost all shot through the head because the remaining parts of their bodies had been sheltered by the parapets. Here they lay as they fell, on their backs or faces side by side or one above the other. A negro with grinning teeth hung right across a white soldier, and his long arms stretched out over the rocky abyss. Some preserved the ferocious expression which they had borne when still alive and lay with clenched fists and distorted limbs. Others calm and quiet looked like stone. In a pit, opposite each other, sat two softas. Though in the uniform of soldiers they were easily recognized as religious students by the white muslin band tied around their fezzes. One had his skull laid open by a shell fragment the other was shot through the temple. Both had obviously been killed by the same shrapnel. Some hundred dead bodies encumbered the trenches, others lay strewn over the hillside.

When we came to the top the Russians had already buried their own killed and had removed all the wounded and

the entrenchments with additional earthworks. In case of need, two divisions were near at hand to support the troops on its summit. I could not but suppose that, despite all hindrances, the Russians would keep their dearly bought conquest at any cost. The water question was a very serious one indeed, especially as the road on the other side was exposed to the Turkish firing. Still we had plenty of beasts of burden, including thousands of camels, especially fitted for this sort of transport. On the following morning, the 3rd instant, I rode to the Karajal observatory, to examine the battle-field of the previous day on our left wing, which I had not seen yet. There the Grand Duke, his son, and his brilliant staff, with the field-telegraph office at their immediate disposal, had been waiting some hours. Hitherto nothing remarkable had occurred. The outposts of the 40th Division, under General Lazareff's able command, had had a little indifferent skirmishing at the Kizil Tepe.

At half-past two o'clock, P.M., I saw through my field-glass three strong lines of Turkish tirailleurs, one behind the other, advancing, rifles in hand, at a quick pace. They occupied a front of at least three miles in length, were preceded by two batteries, and followed by compact supports and reserves, all arranged in perfect order. The whole force must have consisted of about 15,000 men, having their right wing covered by the Kizil Tepe. It was obviously their intention to make a desperate attack on the Karajal camp, and they seem to have supposed that the whole Russian forces had been brought over to our right wing. They were the more led to believe this as on the previous day no signs of troops had been shown here. General Lazareff, with the 40th Division, backed by a regiment of the garrison of Alexandropol and numerous horsemen, lay in ambush for them during the course of that day. The Russians were quite prepared to receive the assaulting foe. Their soldiers lay in rows concealed in the folds of the ground, or behind pyramidal heaps of loose stones. Ostensibly, only two battalions and a battery, together with some cavalry, leaving the Karajal position, marched to the fight. The Turks, encouraged by this apparent weakness, hastened their steps. Their batteries galloped ahead, and opened a brisk shell-fire on those of the Russians, who replied steadily with only eight guns. At the same time, the Kizil Tepe flung shell after shell at all moving objects on the field—ammunition carts, Red Cross waggons, cavalry, herds, and labourers—fortunately without hurting anything but the soil. The skirmishers, too, rattled away while the Turkish infantry drew nearer and nearer, without

escape across that mountain Mukhtar's very existence was threatened by this dangerous turning movement. As he, however, does not lack experience with regard to unexpected surprises in the mountains, to which he had been accustomed during his prolonged struggle with the Montenegrins, he was able to parry the stroke with remarkable skill and success. It may be, too, that he knew, through the instrumentality of his spies the whole Russian plan. Only so can it be explained that he paid little attention to the important Great Yagni position, while he covered the Little Yagni with men and guns in profusion. As he was also well acquainted with the fact that General Sholkownikoff's movement had no serious purport, and was meant to be a mere demonstration, he not only took no heed of it, but planned a counter action which was likely to compel a less circumspect adversary to surrender. As it was, however, General Sholkownikoff retired without losing a prisoner.

The day came to an end, and with it the battle. Weary after a sleepless night, the members of the staff sat down and talked together, or endeavoured to slumber a little with the earth as a mattress and the rocks as pillows. We had nothing to eat and drink, but nobody was very hungry, because of the fatigue and nervous excitement. Waiting for a result, but despairing of success, we were longing for an end, when, on a sudden, a well known howl broke the air above us. A second afterwards, a smash and crack amidst our browsing horses and yawning Cossacks announced that we were within range of the enemy's guns. A few minutes elapsed, and there was another howl and another smash and burst. These shots came from the invisible summit of the Little Yagni at least four miles off. Everybody thought it wise to retreat from so inhospitable a spot. The whole army was ordered to bivouac that night on the positions which had been conquered or occupied during the day, in order to renew the battle on the following morning. Not admiring this plan I left the staff, and made my way back to the Karajal camp. The poor staff officers a polite and interesting body of princes, counts, barons, generals and colonels made themselves as comfortable as possible in the cold air on the hard, stony ground, without shelter, water and fuel. Moreover, the poor horses had not been watered for the last twenty four hours. There is not a drop of water to be found for ten miles around Great Yagni with the exception of the Subatan streamlet still in Mukhtar's grasp.

General Boris Melikoff sent two battalions as a garrison to Great Yagni ordering them and the sappers to strengthen

Division had nearly 700 killed and wounded in this three hours' fighting, whereas the Turks had left about 400 dead on that part of the field which the Russians chose to occupy. I was at a loss to understand why General Heimann, who commanded to the right of General Lazareff, did not assist him. Two regiments of cavalry could have outflanked and annihilated the scattered enemy at the proper moment. Be this as it may, I have not yet witnessed here a more judiciously combined and a more brilliantly conducted affair than that of the afternoon of the 3rd instant. It was carried on in the true military style. Careful plans and brave troops concurred in bringing it to a very satisfactory result. It is to be regretted that the time was too short for a full display of the General's abilities and his soldier's courage, as otherwise I do not doubt the camp at Subatan and the Kizil Tepe would both have been taken. On both sides there was no interminable, never-progressing cannonading, no timid skirmishing. The guns did not fire a minute longer than was necessary to introduce the action, and the tirailleurs, with most laudable pluck, were eager to settle the question of victory or defeat at once. Every single man had visibly made up his mind either to die or to conquer.

General Lazareff must be proclaimed the hero of the battle, and the Grand Duke was highly gratified with this striking proof of his ability. For the 4th a general renewed assault on the Little Yagni was announced. This seemed incredible after the bitter experiments on the 2nd. Luckily the rumour has not been confirmed by events. As the staff had not returned yet, I presumed that something important was in view. I at first intended to ride directly to the foot of the Great Yagni, but learned that our headquarters had been transferred to the Kaback Tepe. Everybody in the camp laboured under the belief that the Great Yagni had, once for all, remained in the possession of the Russian troops, and that the line of communication of the Turkish Army with Kars had been efficaciously interrupted. My astonishment was, therefore, equal to my disappointment on being informed at the Kaback Tepe bivouac that the Great Yagni hill and all the surrounding valuable positions, which the Russians had conquered on the 2nd with so considerable an effusion of blood, had been finally given up on the plea that it was difficult, if not impossible, to provide the troops and animals there with water. It is true that both had undergone, during the last two days, extreme hardships and privations. On the other hand, however, it would be difficult to deny that the inconvenience might have been mitigated easily enough, as thou-

firing a round. They dived down into the ravines and reappeared, always resolutely advancing against the Russian cannons, which had in the meanwhile been reinforced by another battery of eight pieces. Although both were exposed to the bullets, they made no preparations for limbering up, but continued their slow firing. The Turkish batteries were soon silenced by the advance of their own men, who masked them.

Then at last the enemy saw the sunbeams dancing on the levelled rifle barrels peeping behind stones and sods. Now, at once, he began firing with frantic rapidity, but did not slacken his moving ahead. Only stray shots from sharpshooters answered the challenge. Finally, however, the Russians lost their temper, and, returning the fire volley for volley, showed a line of battle of no less extent and power than that of their adversaries. Then they rose together and faced the shower of lead, advancing and firing, firing and advancing, line after line, running from cover to cover, but always moving ahead, right down on the enemy. Every soldier seemed to believe that the Grand Duke's eyes were especially fixed on him. It was refreshing to see how this division, in contrast with the monotonous unproductive skirmishing of their comrades on the previous day, went on without a moment's hesitation, with admirable and matchless courage. The Turks became demoralized by this unexpected resistance, supported by forces quite equal to theirs. Their advance was checked, and came to a standstill. Soon they retrograded slowly, but always firing. It was of no avail. They were driven back irresistibly from undulation to undulation, till at last they turned their backs and ran, seeking shelter behind their pits and breastworks. But again and again the Russians followed and dislodged them at a rush with the bayonet, compelling them to recede, either step by step or in short runs. The Turks became, from minute to minute, more disheartened. Soon they had had enough of the game, and shortly after nightfall were in precipitous flight towards their fortified camp around Subatan, at the foot of the Aladja Dagh. General Lazareff pursued them fast, even through the dark. His lanterns were the incessant sparkling of the long line of firing rifles, and the occasional broad flash of the cannons. When he had lost sight and feeling of the frightened enemy in that pitch dark night, the firing died gradually out, and the slaughter came to an end.

The Turks, completely routed, took refuge behind their entrenchments, while the Russians, after having thrown up breastworks and pits, passed the night on the ground they had so gallantly conquered. Their losses were severe. The 40th

officers were wounded, a small and insignificant proportion compared with the loss of men as the result of other engagements. One colonel of the artillery has been killed. Whether other officers were killed and how many, I have not ascertained yet. Spies and deserters, whose accounts, however, are subject to suspicion because they want to procure a flattering reception for themselves, declare the losses of the Turks to amount to about 8,000 men. Two hundred and forty of their prisoners are in our hands. Reinforcements are again demanded, but only locally.

The experience of the fighting on the 2nd and 3rd of October was not, however, lost. It was resolved by General Melikoff to attack the Awly-Yer (the Acolias Hill of the Russians, the Evliatépisse of the Turkish despatches, and the Olya Tepe of many maps), indicated in the preceding letter of our Correspondent as the real key to the Turkish position, and to prepare for that operation by sending General Lazareff to the rear of Mukhtar Pacha's left. With this object General Lazareff accomplished a march of forty miles by the ruins of Ani, until he had reached the heights of Orlok, thus out-flanking the Turks. On the 14th of October General Lazareff attacked the Turkish left in the rear, compelling it to fall back in the direction of Kars and Vezinkoi. This done, it was decided on the next day to assail in front the positions of Ahmed Mukhtar Pacha, of which the fortified hill of Acolias formed the key. After preparing the way by a well-directed cannonade, the Russians advanced to the assault. In the afternoon General Heimann, with three regiments and a battalion of riflemen, made a brilliant attack upon Mount Acolias, which he succeeded in carrying. By the Russian occupation of this position, Ahmed Mukhtar Pacha's army was cut in two. That part of his army which retreated in the direction of Kars was attacked by the troops under General Lazareff and subsequently pursued by General Heimann. Towards five o'clock in the afternoon the whole Turkish Army was completely defeated, leaving an enormous number of killed, seven thousand prisoners, and four guns. The three Turkish divisions forming the Turkish right wing were entirely surrounded and driven out of their positions on the Aladja Dagħ with great loss, and at eight o'clock in the evening were com-

sands of carriages and beasts of burden, camels and others, in the Commissariat Service, are at the General's disposal. The Turks, moreover, had made, two months since, the necessary arrangement for the proper sustenance of their garrison on the summit of the Great Yagni. What they had managed to overcome the Russians might have overcome too. I don't know why the system of digging Abyssinian wells has never been tried in this barren country, where water must be found at a certain depth. The rich cold springs spouting out of the Kurukdere ravine indicate the presence of large supplies, filtered down from the high mountains all around. The question anyhow, is worth an attempt.

At the Kaback Tepe a little shelling and skirmishing was going on without visible effect. Mukhtar Pasha stood triumphantly with his staff on the top of the Great Yagni, which he was allowed to occupy without spending a single drop of his soldiers' blood. He has, after a narrow escape, due only to

be made on the Turks whether it will be more wisely planned and conducted than the previous ones, and arrive at any substantial result nobody can tell yet. Bad weather has now set in, the troops have been withdrawn to their former quarters, with the exception of General Count Grabbe's brigade, which is still waiting on the Kaback Tepe for further orders. I believe that something grand is projected, and then only it will be decided whether the actual campaign will come to a premature conclusion or not. Should however, the previous very conspicuous faults be repeated, I cannot anticipate much glory and success.

the enemy's weak point. Two such points were discovered in the course of the late battle. Vezinkoi and the rear of the Aladja position, where General Skolkownikoff operated. Both advantages if followed up would have led, no doubt, to an entire victory. Where was the *coup d'aile*? Where were the reserves? Why was the pluck shown on the next day by General Lazareff only? No concentrated action of artillery, no sweeping dash of the cavalry on the broad plain, and, for all that, heavy losses. We had, according to the latest accounts, 3,360 men *hors de combat*, among them 960 killed and 2,400 wounded. We lost only two prisoners. Fifty-four

did not directly follow, as had been confidently hoped by our leading strategists, yet that battle and the following series of engagements have led to a state of things synonymous with victory.

The total losses of Mukhtar Pacha are estimated by spies at above 8,000 men, owing particularly to the several desperate assaults on General Sholkownikoff's brigade, which had occupied the summit of Mount Aladja, in the rear of his very headquarters, and to the discomfiture inflicted on him by General Lazareff before Subatan on the 3rd. During the night between the 9th and 10th instant the Mushir secretly withdrew from his fortified advanced position in the plain, together with the Kizil Tepe and Great Yagni hills, and retired to his former entrenched encampments, half way up the Aladja. It may be that the turning movement which the dashing General Lazareff, with twenty-six battalions, forty-eight field-pieces, and six regiments of cavalry, is directing from the south-east on Mukhtar's line of communication with Kars, and eventually Erzeroum, has induced him to concentrate his scattered and diminished troops. On the other hand, it can hardly be supposed that he had been fully informed by his spies, never paid as they are, of that hazardous, but certainly very daring and efficient operation, on the date of his retreat, when it was in its very beginning, and even if he knew of it he may have considered it as a mere cavalry raid.

The startling fact that a field-telegraph line has been established without interruption from the Karajal headquarters to General Lazareff's division, following him all along his circuitous march of at least forty miles through a mountainous, hostile country, completely in the rear of the actual Turkish position, gives ample proof of the fact that the Pacha is ignorant of that double-edged move on this great chessboard. The telegraphic communication was indeed once interrupted, and much anxiety was felt about it, but within two hours it was re-established. The wind, and not malicious Turks, had thrown down some of the poles. This inference seems correct, therefore, that the Pacha's hasty retreat was rather prompted by the comparatively enormous losses he had sustained, either from the relentless fighting during the week previous to his withdrawal, or from wholesale desertions, than by General Lazareff's intrepid interposition. Had his valuable Circassian scouts not disappeared, driven away in despair and disgust, they would have assuredly succeeded in fathoming the Russian design, or at least in destroying the telegraph line, which now enables a simultaneous movement of our two columns to be carried out, the

pelled to surrender. Thirty-two guns and an immense quantity of war material were captured. Ahmed Mukhtar fled to Kars.

The following letter from the Correspondent at the Russian headquarters describes the preparations for the battle of the 15th of October —

△ CAWI KAPAJAL, October 13th — Since the 2nd instant continuous fighting has been going on here. After the sanguinary engagement at Subatan on the 3rd, however, the encounters have not been of a serious character, and are, on either side, mere demonstrations intended to draw the enemy's attention from the real object of operations. In opposition to our former inactivity during the best part of the season, due chiefly to the insufficient number of troops, a busy military spirit now prevails in our army, and judicious combinations are on the point of being carried into effect with the view of outwitting Mukhtar Pacha, though it certainly must be admitted that he is not the man to be circumvented by ordinary means especially while he sticks with unshaken tenacity to his stronghold on the rocks. Still one crushing power is brought forth against him which to counterbalance is a difficult task even for a

bers
Mu host is fast melting away,
t nding the bow of enduring
patience peculiar to their enthralled populations to the point of
breaching it. The Circassians unable to find anything worth
plundering in the locality with which to sustain themselves and
their horses, constrained by hunger, have long ago left the
camp in crowd. The mustafiz and redifs most of them men who
were the only support of their families have either openly done
the same or else have fled to the hills. The plea of
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hence

As a proof of this reckless system of compelling the army
to provide for its wants at the expense of the country where
it is quartered should be continued it is easy to foresee that
their resistance must very soon crumble to pieces. Still the
Russian Commander in Chief is not at all willing to leave
things as they are and to entrust to fate or General Winter
the reduction of the Turkish forces. Although the attack on
the 3rd instant may be called in a certain sense a failure
inasmuch as the routing and desolating of Mukhtar Pacha

desperate assault. Before daybreak this morning he marched out six battalions of volunteers, supported by reserves and artillery, and hurled them against the Great Yagni. This brigade stealthily advanced towards the new redoubt, and would have surprised and taken it but for an accident. The Russians, inconceivably careless as they sometimes are, had not only neglected their outpost service, but had not even a squad of Cossacks at hand for scouting and other useful purposes. But, fortunately for them, at the very moment of the Turkish attack, two other battalions arrived which had been told off to relieve those on working duty. So three battalions instead of one were able to act. Posted partly behind the entrenchments, they received the assailants with a well-aimed, quick fire, and compelled them, after an hour's fighting, to retire in disorder, charging them with the bayonet. General von Schack states that, had he had at his disposal a regiment of cavalry, he would have annihilated them to the last man. The Russian losses amount to only twenty-four men killed and wounded. The Turks left 123 corpses on the field, and may, in consequence, be estimated to have lost some 400 men. Such engagements and tactical movements are only the prelude to what is expected to take place when General Lazareff shall have reached his destination, the Orlok summits or Vezinkoi. Then we hope the question of our invading or not invading Armenia will be definitely settled. His horses are much fatigued by their long and difficult journey across those mountains, and it is on these grounds that he is advancing slowly. To-morrow, or the day after to-morrow, however, we confidently expect a result. Whether it will involve a great decisive battle, or will lead only to a series of minor engagements, or to Mukhtar's retreat without his accepting the challenge, will soon be decided.

P.S.—I have just spoken to one of the Turkish wounded prisoners, a captain, aged about 45, who was taken this morning before the Great Yagni Hill. His name is Osman, and he is a native of Adrianople, which place he left six years ago. He was struck on the thigh by a fragment of stone, and suffered at first great pain. Now he feels a good deal better, owing to the excellent medical treatment and the careful attendance he is enjoying. As I know Adrianople well, I had no difficulty in getting into his confidence. His statement is as follows:—The Mushir had for a time made up his mind to remain where he was around Subatan during the coming winter, and had ordered for that purpose the erection of earth huts for the troops, which were being built.

object of which is to envelop Mukhtar Pacha and compel him either to strive on his barren cold summits or to surrender. Should General Lazareff whose whereabouts is still kept secret be directed to attack and occupy the Orlok summit and Vezinkoi while we assail the same points from this side of the mountains victory is probable and Mukhtar Pacha will then have to fight for his existence. If on the contrary these operations should turn out to be only a sort of affected strategy without being followed by a tactical decisive stroke, nothing can come out of it but a retreat in the mud when the impending bad weather sets in here.

I hope that this time General Lazareff's movements will not be arrested or impaired by half measure instructions which render success impossible. Should the Mushir despite his circumspection and general sharp-sightedness be caught in the meshes of the extensive strategic network thrown around him the siege of Kars and the loss of Armenia might be the consequence. At all events the Pacha's prospects are bad—worse indeed than they have ever been before. The task of extricating himself out of his internal and external difficulties without yielding his ground, is worthy of the highest military talent and if successfully accomplished would be a title to glory for him. I have however full faith in General Lazareff's ability, courage and resources.

The Kizil Tepe on the conquest of which Mukhtar Pacha on the 25th of August based a claim of victory is now again in Russian hands. The entrenchments there are all of very neat and careful workmanship and prove the peculiar aptitude of the Turks or their advisers for this branch of warfare. Their guns—withdrawn of course before the surrender—had all been placed in deep cuttings and covered in with double crossed rows of strong timber with a thick bed of earth on the top. How the Russian artillerymen could dream of dismantling such blindages and dismounting the guns by firing at them from their favourite distance of three or four miles one is at a loss to understand. The Russian staff it seems has come at last to a better knowledge of the tactical importance of the Great Yagm, and is now determined to keep it. Since the day before yesterday a redoubt has been erected at its foot opposite the Aul Yer summit and has been armed with cannon of heavy calibre for the purpose of bombarding the enemy's camps night and day. I hear them firing now. Mukhtar Pacha, deeply disappointed at the constant progress of the Russian earthworks which proves on the Grand Duke's part a firm resolution to maintain his hold there had recourse to a

with another division, entrusting the whole corps to the command of his lieutenant, Raschid Pacha, President of the Military Council, and now our prisoner.

Mukhtar's obvious intent was to weigh with all his available forces on General Lazareff, trying to crush him or to compel him to retreat whence he came, and then fall on the other fraction of our army here. That he had this idea is ascertained by the unanimous evidence of the prisoners, and it is, moreover, in accordance with common sense. General Lazareff, however, had in the meantime occupied on the 13th the Oghur Hill, after a sharp engagement. Then he telegraphed to the Grand Duke's headquarters that Mukhtar was before him with superior forces, and he urged, therefore, that from our side a simultaneous attack might be directed against the Turkish lines. This message reached here precisely at three o'clock on the morning of the 14th. The Commander-in-Chief at once complied with Lazareff's request. I have already pointed out the remarkable circumstance that a field telegraph had been established with laudable celerity and regularity throughout the length of that circuitous line of operations. Although it was only protected by Cossack picquets, it had never been interrupted but once, by a mere accident, and for two hours.

Our whole strategic plan was suspended on that thin wire. On its strength depended the fate of this campaign in Armenia, because it alone rendered an harmonious tactical action possible which secured success, and without which we could not hope to dislodge the enemy from his strongholds. The Pacha, ignoring either this state of things, or, in his Turkish prejudice against all innovations, scorning that peculiarly useful modern contrivance, laid no stress on its establishment. He found out subsequently that that wire was in fact around his neck ready to strangle him at a moment's notice. And so it did. The battle on the 2nd instant was, it seems, the most efficient practical lesson taught to our strategists. They recognized at last their former capital faults and blunders, both with regard to general conception and to tactical details. Generals Obruteneff and Gurstchin were yet experimenting on the 2nd instant, when, in reference to the available force, their plan was too complicated and extended. The visible good effect of General Sholkownikoff's turning movement then rendered it obvious in which direction it was best to act. So that operation was again performed, but judiciously on a larger scale, and aiming at more important points.

We had no unnecessary trouble, bloodshed, and neutralizing of our forces before the impregnable Little Yagni Hill. We had

On seeing, however, the fast increasing number of Russians threatening his flanks and rear, he thought it advisable to concentrate his forces by retiring to the summits of the Aladja, and abandoning all his advanced positions in the plain. Mukhtar is well aware of General Lazareff's turning movement, and has detached to meet him the Ferik (Lieutenant-General) Selim Pacha, with fifteen battalions, who is now occupied in fortifying the Orlok Mountain and Vezinkoi. The Pacha's decision as to his eventual retreat to Kars will depend upon the issue of the expected battle. The Turkish lieutenant-colonel commanding the column of attack to-day has likewise been wounded, but was carried out of the turmoil by some of his soldiers.

The following is a description by the same Correspondent of the great Battle of Aladja Dag, which at length decisively and irrevocably determined the character of the campaign in Armenia. It is followed by another account of the same battle by the Special Correspondent with the Turks.

△ CAMP KARAJAL, *October 17th.*—Mukhtar Pacha's army has ceased to exist. I can state this truth on personal knowledge of the operations by which the dissolution of the Turkish force has been accomplished before my own eyes. The Ottoman General, who had proudly kept his position for months on the almost inaccessible mountains and hills opposite Kurukdere, has been shattered against his own rocks. I stated in my last letter from Karajal that General Lazareff, at the head of 27 battalions, 40 guns, and six regiments of cavalry, had directed a turning movement against Mukhtar Pacha's rear with the view of cutting him off from Kars and Erzeroum, and crushing him thus, once for all, between the two principal portions of our army. His march across the mountains was, of course, somewhat hampered by his cannons and military train, which compelled him to seek and follow a rather circuitous carriage road. He was at first guided by the Arpa Tchai River down to Kotchiran. From here he passed over to Dighur, where he left two battalions, and then, wheeling round to the north-west, he chose for his mark the Orlok Hill and Vezinkoi. This village, strongly entrenched, secured Mukhtar's position and his communications with Kars. I stated in my last letter that the Mushir, on hearing of General Lazareff's serious movement, detached Selim Pacha with fifteen battalions to meet him. It seems, however, that he had reinforced a few days later these troops

three or four hours' fast riding to reach it. Then the little hillock turns out to be a bulky cluster of plateaus and summits of some miles in extent.

We followed the foot of the Aladja. The guns placed on its terraces flung from time to time some shells at our reserves and the heavy battery, without doing any harm. None the less they became somewhat annoying on account of their disagreeable howl and the dry crack of their bursting. The Awly-Yer, which soon stood threatening before us, had a more serious, warlike aspect than its big neighbour. It was encircled by two broad rings of white smoke—one around its basis, produced by the incessant firing of fifty-six cannons, and the other, on its summit, by the musketry and artillery of the Turks, and the bursting Russian projectiles. This time the Russian gunners behaved well. They had placed their pieces at the reasonable distance of 1,800 yards, and laying aside the inefficient shells, concentrated a shrapnel shower on that part of the enemy's front which had been selected to be assailed by the storming battalions. Balls of white smoke, waving for awhile in the calm air like balloons, indicated that the terrible messengers of death and destruction had burst at the proper point for sending fragments and bullets among the lines of the defenders.

I observed how at once the musketry ceased after the bursting on a certain spot, and only a few minutes afterwards it began again, when living men had replaced the dead and wounded. Three strong columns of Grenadiers lay in clusters on the steepest parts of the northern side of the hill, as though riveted to it. They were waiting there for final orders, in comparative security, because the Turks behind the breast-works were unable to hit them. The latter could not venture to stoop forward for that purpose without the risk of being shot immediately by the Russian artillerymen or tirailleurs. In this manner the fighting continued for three mortal hours, and had apparently come to a standstill. Already the suspicion rose in my mind that this engagement, like the former ones which I had the opportunity of witnessing, would end without any other result than that of mere slaughter. We thought it convenient to rest awhile, and had some breakfast. Its principal ingredient was the Russian black rye bread, which is hard enough to be used instead of cannon-balls in case of need.

The fighting on all other points than the Awly-Yer was insignificant. The Aladja and the Little Yagni continued their indifferent cannonading, aiming at random. All my attention was of course drawn to the Awly-Yer, where perhaps the

not abandoned again the Great Yagui, the guardian bastion of Mukhtai's front, but kept and fortified it. We did not rely on Mohammedan cavalry scouts for the security of our army and the watching of the enemy's doings, but closed him in with two divisions, which established a solid curtain of infantry double posts, with guards and regulars patrolling before their encampments. It was at last universally acknowledged that the Awly-Yer Hill was the enemy's centre pivot, and that the Great Yagui was doubtless the key to his position. Its possession alone enabled us to attack that all-important point. I have already stated in my last letter how stupid it was on the part of the Turks to evacuate it. General Heilmann was charged to carry the Awly-Yer at any cost, and had for that purpose the gallant division of the Caucasian Grenadiers and 56 cannon at his disposal. The Moscow Grenadiers, posted on his left, received orders to refrain from acting until that hill was taken. They formed the reserve, and observed the enemy's movements on the Aladja Dagh. Opposite this mountain a heavy battery of 24 pounders had since the 12th bombarded the enemy's camp there night and day, at intervals of fifteen minutes, in order to disturb it and harass the Turks. Our right wing was covered by the Ardahan Brigade, under General Komaroff, and some regiments of cavalry, which were intended to check the garrison of Kars, and that of the Little Yagui.

Early in the morning of the 15th at about five o'clock, his Imperial Highness the Grand Duke and General Loris Melnikoff left with their staffs the Karajal camp, and proceeded to the environs of Subatan, where the Moscow Division of Grenadiers had their position. I was not ready to accompany them, not having been informed in time of the news concerning General Lazareff's message and the subsequent intentions, thus I was only able to start about two hours later together with the Russian Consul Mr. Obermuller, who formerly exercised his functions in Erzeroum. We rode over the well known plain stretching from the Karajal hills to the Aladja Dagh, towards Subatan. We had no time to spare, for sharp firing at the Awly Yer attracted our attention. There, I well knew, the fate of the day would be decided, and therefore we were determined to reach that point as quickly as possible. Distances here, though they appear insignificant, are in fact enormous because objects for estimating them, such as trees, houses, &c, are utterly wanting. One sees a hill before him of apparently small size, and is thus inclined to judge it only a walk of an hour from the point of observation, but on trying the distance one finds that it takes

flled Turks, relinquishing all hope, ran for their lives, pursued by bullets and bayonets.

The formidable redoubt was at last taken by that gallant onslaught. When we arrived at the foot of the steep, shell after shell was still fired at the middle part by a Turkish battery on the slope of the Aladja next to the Awly-Yer, and by cannons on the top of a commanding mountain opposite it, bursting behind and before us. But when all our men had arrived at the summit, that firing stopped on a sudden, and the terrible hill which, ten minutes before, was all fire, smoke, and noise, was once more silent. To our right we saw General Heimann riding to the top with his staff. We reached it about the same time as he, and I believe I was the first to have the honour of congratulating him on so brilliant a victory. General Heimann, losing no time, paraded his soldiers, and ordered immediately a sharp pursuit, which was carried out in a clever manner. They met with only a feeble resistance on the part of the Turks, who hastily withdrew in disorder.

The next fortified plateau to the south-west, situated just before that of Vezinkoi, was also stormed within an hour. In the meantime we saw the white smoke rise on the opposite side of that village. There General Lazareff assailed the enemy from his rear, and barred his retreat to Kars. The batteries also closed in with the scattered Turks wherever they perceived them, and covered them with a hailstorm of projectiles. The vanquished foe tried to rally and escape in all directions, but found no issue, and was soon close hedged in by infantry, artillery, and cavalry. Here it is said that Mukhtar himself was wounded in the hand, and sought for attendance and shelter in Kars, abandoning thus his doomed army. In truth, however, he had not received a scratch. He had commanded the battle from the summit of a mountain, the name of which I do not remember just now, next to the east of the Awly-Yer, from which a couple of guns still continued to molest us. I saw him there through my field-glass, together with General Kemball, if I am not mistaken. When the Awly-Yer was conquered by the Russians, those gentlemen disappeared, and had a narrow escape to Kars, by availing themselves of the opening between us and General Lazareff.

Another party of Turks—the bulk of the garrison of the Awly-Yer and its environs—were pursued through a pretty large valley, which is formed by the upper part of the Subatan streamlet and its tributaries. The battle had been won in a brilliant style, but yet the trophies had not been counted, and

future destiny of the Turkish Empire was at stake. Seeing no advance, I thought that General Heimann might again have failed to understand the full importance of the task entrusted to him. Why did those Grenadiers not move, although sure to be badly dealt with if they finally had to retire before the enemy's pursuit? It was a moment of anxiety and disappointment. The idea that Mukhtar had evidently neglected to fortify and garrison that hill with the utmost care, was, however, somewhat comforting. Then, on a sudden, three Turkish cannons boomed to our left beyond the Subutan streamlet and ravine, which separate the Awly-Yer from the Aludja. From this mountain descended, towards the Awly-Yer, a strong line of Turkish tirailleurs, coming obviously to the rescue of that hard-pressed position. But before they could even cross the ravine their advance was arrested by a Russian line which compelled them to withdraw. At the same time the three columns of Russian grenadiers told off for the assault on the Awly-Yer moved onward up that hill.

We were in our saddles in a twinkling, and galloped ahead, with the view of witnessing this supreme achievement. A rocky ravine, however, with perpendicular borders, only visible when about ten yards off its margin, checked our speed, and compelled us to make a circuit. Finally, we found a path leading down and up again. There we discovered the naked bodies of apparently Russian soldiers in an advanced state of decay. They were not mutilated or disfigured. Unluckily, we had at that moment no leisure to ascertain whether other victims of Turkish brutality lay unburied on that dismal spot, so we hurried on. Then, again, large tracts of the dry grass which uniformly covers the fields and pastures were burning before us, ignited by the Turkish shells. Our horses snorted, frightened by the approach of the flames, but we forced the animals through. The black Grenadiers swarmed on all sides over the yellow hill. Steadily they climbed towards the summit, always firing, in face of the desperate resistance of the Turks, who stormed, the cone, top level

with shells and shrapnels. When we passed one of them, a colonel ceased firing, and said with proud satisfaction — "Go and look at the work we have done up there. I think we have served them well." At that moment repeated hurrahs sounded through the air, and the Grenadiers jumped in crowds over the enemy's ditches and parapets. Then the

follow up the advancing columns to Vezinkoi, where General Lazareff, descending from the Orlok Mountain, had begun decisive attack. The day before he had already repulsed reconnaissance directed against him by Raschid Pacha. To him and to General Heimann—especially to the latter—the prominent part of this day's glory is due. The Emperor will perhaps create him Count of Awly-Yer—at least he has deserved such a distinction.

On riding back to the Karajal camp, I had the good fortune to witness a sharp engagement between the Moscow Grenadiers and the Turks in the Aladjä Dagh. The Grand Duke, who observed that attack from the heavy battery, which was now useless and silent, had ordered another regiment to take the advance. The Turks answered with spasmodic cannon and rifle firing, but were gradually driven from terrace to terrace beyond their camp to the summit of the mountain. About half-past four they gave up further resistance, and retired to the opposite side, leaving everything they had in the hands of the Russians, with the exception of some of their guns. They hovered there in the wilderness for a while, without water, food, fuel, or shelter, and then despairing, surrendered at about half-past eight the same evening. They denied that they had cannons, but they had, and it is likely that they had hidden them in the recesses of the Aladjä. Hitherto the Russians have had no time to seek for them, but they will find so, I hope, before the snow is likely to cover that mountain.

Thus well-nigh the entire Turkish host had been swept away. Unfortunately, the garrison of the Little Yagni, watching their time, when everybody's attention was drawn to Vezinkoi, escaped with stores, cannons, and ammunition to Kars. This I regret to say, was the fault of our cavalry, which did nothing to prevent the retreat, on the plea of its being dark already; else it would have been literally impossible for the Turks to slip through our lines, as the hill is surrounded on all sides by dry and level ground. Colonel Kavalinsky, chief of the staff of our cavalry, reported at nine o'clock to the Grand Duke that seven pachas, thirty-six cannons, and twenty-six battalions had surrendered and laid down their arms. On the following day a great many prisoners and some guns were captured. The exact number of the enemy's loss has not been recorded yet, but, at all events, its total will amount to nearly three-quarters of its original strength. That is to say, his entire army has been scattered, destroyed, or captured. Among the captives we had the doubtful honour of seeing here at the Karajal camp seven pachas and some colonels. We remarked among them Raschid Pacha, Lieutenant-General and President of

still separate Turkish brigades on the Aladja and the Little Yagnı made a show of resistance. The parapets and ditches of the Awly Yer redoubt looked indeed very much like those of the Great Yagnı twelve days before, after it had just been stormed. Rows of dead Turks, some horribly disfigured by shell fragments were to be seen upon the earthworks and at the bottom of the ditches. Some were literally torn to pieces by the shrapnels. I think most of them were killed by the artillery, which indeed had done its duty this time. An officer of high rank lay dead on his back in the ditch. He was a pasha or colonel, perhaps, but it could not be made out because the soldiers had stripped him of his overcoat and boots. The contracted brow and the fierce expression of his lips proved that he had met with a sudden death. His fine Arab horse lay dead by his side. Very few wounded remained on the field when we came up.

I don't think that the Russians have sustained great losses by that assault because in the first place the shrapnels had told their number and began and in the second to permit them to fire over the earthworks with good effect. Most of their rifle shots were aimed too high. The inside of the redoubt comprising the whole natural platform of the hill, was ploughed with shells and strewn with their fragments and bullets flattened on the stones. Three Krupp guns with the manufacturer's name on them together with their carriages and ammunition were captured there. One of them had its right wheel broken by a shell, but the other two were in serviceable condition so the Russian officers tried their range at the fugitives. The first shot, however, fired without the necessary elevation nearly fell among a column of their own soldiers.

The Turks are evidently not in want of rifle ammunition yet. About a railway truckload of cartridges partly in their original boxes partly in loose heaps or strewn singly over the ground might have afforded the means for annihilating a whole army. Some empty two wheeled bullock carts and tents almost in rags constituted the remainder of the booty. The tents were immediately cut into strips by the Russian soldiers who wrapped them around their feet as an excellent substitute for stockings. Lines of cavalry, with their horse artillery now trotted up between us and the Great Yagnı, riding towards Kars in order to cut off the enemy's retreat. It was now four o'clock, the weather was fine and rather hot, but notwithstanding my curiosity I resisted the temptation to

The following letters are from the Correspondent who had been with Mukhtar Pacha throughout the campaign, and who, besides witnessing, may be said to have shared the defeat of that commander. For some of the details, which only the Staff could know, the Correspondent was indebted to the General himself:—

□ ERZEROU, *October 24th.*—The tide of fortune has turned, and I find myself here part of the crowd that fled in disorder before the Russian attack of the 14th and 15th inst. It was a terrible disaster for the Turkish arms, all the more so that sanguine expectations were entertained as to the power of resistance of the Ottoman Army acting on the defensive. To understand the catastrophe it is necessary to go back a couple of weeks. We, that is the Correspondents of European journals, tried in vain to telegraph the situation. We were met by that passive resistance which characterizes the Ottoman Government. A telegram had first to be translated into Turkish at the headquarters, and modified at will by the young staff officers who had a smattering of French. Even then the authorities at Stamboul often took exception to the mild messages sent; but it was only three weeks after that the Correspondent was notified that, by "order of the superior authority," his message of such and such a date was intercepted. Over and over again, when the crisis was imminent, I tried to communicate the fact by telegraph. All to no purpose. No one who has not lived in countries like this can imagine the systematic obstruction which mars the best efforts of a Correspondent.

I have already telegraphed viâ Syra some details of the initial fighting in the plain north of the Turkish positions on the Aladja mountains. During three days fierce attacks were made by the Russians on the two hills—the Greater and Lesser Yagni, which block the passage to Kars. We estimated the Russian loss at 12,000 hors de combat on the occasion. This was on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th of October. Then came a pause. Turkish officers told me confidentially the day on which we were to enter Gumri (Alexandropol), and soldiers ate their maigre pilaff all the more cheerfully, thinking over the flesh pots that awaited them beyond the Arpa Tchai. The capture of Kizil Tepe and our advance into the plain had filled every one with hope; but dark was the disappointment which followed the order of the 8th to abandon the hard-won heights, and retire to our old bleak quarters on the slopes of Aladja. Mukhtar Pacha's spies had brought him intelligence

Military Council, Hussein Kyazim Pacha, chief of Mukhtar's staff, Mustafa Pacha, and the so called Madjar Omer Pacha. The last named a genuine Russian by birth, educated in a military school at St Petersburg, and a former Russian officer, took an active part in the Hungarian revolution in 1849, and, coming over to Turkey with Kossuth and the other refugees, embraced Islamism. Thenceforward he distinguished himself as a fervent adherent of the Prophet. As years have elapsed since that time he has nothing to fear from the resentment of his countrymen, and will be considered and treated like the other Turkish generals. By the Grand Duke's orders each of these gentlemen received a good deal of money for his travelling expenses.

The Russian losses are about 50 officers and 1 600 men killed and wounded, numbers quite insignificant as compared with the result of the battle. The consequences are uncertain yet, but some hope that Kars may be induced to surrender is still entertained, and negotiations for that purpose are said to be going on. I do not believe, however, that the Turkish commander there is inclined to give the fortress over without fighting for it. In the meantime General Heilmann is marching across the Soghanlı Daglı (Onion Mountain) towards Erzeroum, the garrison of which is exceedingly feeble. Should, as there can be little doubt, General Lazareff be sharp and lucky enough to shut out Ismail Pacha from Erzeroum, and crush him between his own force and that of Tergukasoff that fortress cannot then be defended. Its chief source of weakness, as I have said, is its extent. It requires an army of at least 50,000 men to garrison its numerous detached forts, and the central enceinte. The Russians, therefore, must make it their principal object to prevent all succour of men and material from entering the city, and then it cannot fail to succumb to a general escalade. If even Dervish Pacha should advance with the greatest imaginable despatch from Bitoum via Trebizond, he cannot reach Erzeroum before General Heilmann. It is true that the weather, which is as bad as possible, there being continuous rain, may prove a more serious hindrance to the progress of the Russians than all the Turkish forces together. The Battle of Aladja Daglı will, of course, redound to the honour of his Imperial Highness the Grand Duke Michael in the Russian annals. We hardly expected so brilliant a victory after the series of inconceivable blunders committed since the opening of the campaign. The camp is being removed from here to Wladikars, but very slowly, because the means of transport are insufficient.

sending three simultaneously. One I got translated into Turkish and sent from the camp. Another I sent by special messenger to Kars, to be forwarded to a friend in Erzeroum, and thence to London; and a third I sent by courier to Trebizond and Syra, to be thence sent on. From old experience I know what Turkish translations are, especially when made by an interested staff officer expressly told off to take the sting out of unfavourable messages. Consequently I didn't rely much on my camp despatch. Viâ Erzeroum I had better hopes, as an intelligent agent there would at once perceive the gist of my message and re-establish its meaning when translated into French.

On the morning of the 9th October it was evident, from the movements of the Russian patrols, that they were infinitely astonished at our nocturnal retreat. They couldn't apparently understand the thing, and their manœuvres showed they were fearful of a stratagem. Towards eight o'clock the entire Russian Army was in movement, advancing straight towards us. Seven squadrons of Cossacks, preceded by a long line of cavalry skirmishers, came first, closely followed by an ominous-looking line of batteries. It was a moment of intense anxiety for us. We believed the enemy was about to make a general assault. The Cossacks entered Subatan, a village we had held previously, in front of our centre. Five minutes after eight guns were in position on the ridge above the village. Hadji Veli, another village to the left, was next occupied, and simultaneously a column of infantry scaled the isolated hill of Kizil Tepe, the capture of which had earned for Mukhtar Pacha the title of "Ghazi," or "Victorious," conferred by the Sultan, together with a sabre of honour, a decoration in diamonds, and a present of two horses from the Imperial stables. About eleven o'clock the entire Russian line had advanced close under our positions, and the eight guns at Subatan opened fire. We sent out three battalions in skirmishing order to check the advance. A battery of Krupps took up its position on a rocky knoll and replied to the Russian fire. At one P.M. the infantry were engaged, and five Russian batteries added their fire to that first in action. The Russian batteries are of eight guns each, and the forty-eight pieces thus brought forward, formed in semicircle, literally deluged our advanced line with projectiles, especially directed against the Turkish batteries. Fortunately for the Turkish gunners, the enemy's fire was execrable. The vast majority of the shells burst two or three hundred yards short or over. Now and then a shell burst almost on the Turkish guns, but these were the exceptions. The musketry

of the arrival of heavy Russian reinforcements, and others were said to be en route for the camp. Our position was deemed too extended to resist a serious attack from superior numbers, and hence the order to retire. It was ten o'clock on a bleak stormy night, and after the Marshal's tent had been already struck, that the rest of us at headquarters were notified that a move was necessary. Even General Kemball had no earlier warning. I myself, at half past ten, wrote, at the dictation of a staff officer, the note which warned him to get ready. The camp fires still blazed in the plain, though the troops were already marching for their new quarters. Not a musket shot announced that the enemy's outposts had cognizance of the retreat, and, on the whole, as regards secrecy, the retrograde movement was admirably conducted. Not so, however, from the point of view of order. It has rarely been my chance to witness such utter confusion. No one seemed to know where the new position was. I met

Cimmerian darkness of the
officers demanding in vain
men. I found Dr Casson

and his ambulance in a state of hopeless despair. The train of rude ox carts sent to transport the wounded and hospital material had disappeared in the darkness. The tents were still standing, and Dr Casson and his young colleague, ill with typhoid were literally "left alone." The Doctor prayed me, as I, too, rode by in hopeless search of the new headquarters, to send him back his arabas but as at least five hundred of these vehicles were groaning and creaking over the Cyclopean rock masses, I was soon obliged to give up my search. I rode on up the slopes of Mount Aladja meeting everywhere parties of troops and transport waggons, every one asking every one else where they were supposed to go. After three hours of weary search I resigned myself to destiny, and, dismounting from my horse, lay down on the scanty grass crisp with hoar frost. I tried to sleep in vain—people stumbled over me in the dark. Bewildered soldiers roused me a hundred times to ask the way, and camels and

off but as yet no tents had been pitched. I found the Marshal eating his breakfast outside his tent door. The staff officers were wandering about looking for their tents, mislaid during the night. Mine was nowhere to be found, so I camped under shelter of a rock. There I indited the telegram which I hope has reached you. I took the precaution of

that direction. The enemy was evidently trying how far he could venture without drawing us from our positions; and the knowledge thus they gained proved fatal in the end. Mukhtar Pacha was evidently resolved, *coûte-qui-coûte*, to stand on the defensive. Towards sunset the same evening we were most disagreeably surprised by the range of two siege guns placed in position near Subatan. The headquarters were concealed from view behind a rocky ledge, from the crest of which the Marshal was in the habit of observing the plain with a large telescope. I was sitting at my tent door, for by this time I had managed to find a tent. A loud whirring noise attracted my attention, and next moment a sixteen-centimètre shell burst with a crash not twenty yards from the General and his staff. The range was enormous. From the flash of the gun till the arrival of the shell seventeen seconds elapsed. The enemy's guns were at a distance of seven thousand yards, and, besides, our position was some eight hundred feet above the plain. As a first shot at an unknown distance, the correctness of the aim was remarkable in the extreme. Shell after shell followed in rapid succession, some directed against headquarters, the position of which must have been indicated by spies, as the tents were hidden behind rocks, and some against the fortified hill of Evliatepessi, on our extreme left. All night long this shelling continued; and for my personal safety I was obliged to pack up and move to the ambulance, situated, as I have said before, some three miles to the left. This was a fortunate move for me, as it gave me an opportunity of witnessing the turning movement of the enemy, which resulted in our total defeat. Dr. Casson's ambulance was pitched in a narrow gorge close by the Turkish one. A troop of Arab horse watched the plain below and guarded the ravine which ran close by. It was midnight as I established myself in the tent kindly given me by the doctor. He seemed very uneasy about his wounded. The ambulance flags flying beside the tents were about as big as an ordinary pocket-handkerchief, and there was every reason to fear that they might not be visible to the artillerists below. It was decided to move from this dangerous spot higher up the hill; and accordingly next morning the change was effected. The tents we pitched on the brow of the long slope of Aladja stretching towards Kars, whence we commanded a view of both plains, north and south.

To render the battles of the 14th and 15th instant intelligible a slight description of the ground is necessary. Aladja is a mountain 8,800 feet in height, its base of an elongated oval form, running east and west. The summit, of a conical form, is

fire, extending over a line of about three miles, for nearly all our force was engaged at this hour, was violent in the extreme, especially on the Turkish side, where the soldiers plied their Martini Peabody rifles with an absurd rapidity. The enemy's fire was much more deliberate, and I noticed their officers galloping to and fro to check any excessive outbreak of musketry fire which might occur. Long after sunset the scintillations of rifle-fire continued, emphasized by the broad gleam of the artillery

After much reflection I am still unable to make out since what was the object of this engagement. We had abandoned deliberately certain positions, and certainly we did not try to retake them. Neither did the Russians seem disposed to push their occupation farther up the Aladja. We lost nearly one thousand hors de combat on that day and it was pitiable to see the state of the wounded. In the Turkish Army here there is absolutely no provision made for carrying the wounded off the field. Those who can limp away struggle on often for hours seeking help and those more severely hit often rest forty eight hours on the field. I had been unable to find my tent, and was obliged to bivouac a second night on the hill side. All night long moaning crowds of wounded came issuing out of the darkness like troubled phantoms, asking feebly for the "basta bine" (the ambulance). No one knew where it was, and the miserable sufferers went on groaning and complaining into the darkness. I afterwards discovered that the ambulances were just three miles away on our left flank. I venture to say that not one of those poor fellows found relief that night and all of them must have passed the long cold night like myself, freezing amid the rocks.

On the 10th all was still. Not a shot from either side, except from one large position gun which the Russians had established on Kızıl Tepe, and from which they threw occasional shells against the redoubt on Lakırdı Tepe, a conical hill on our extreme right. Large masses of Russian troops moved over the plain by Kaback Tepe, ultimately occupying the greater Yagmı hill, and long columns were seen defiling towards our right, marching in the direction of the ruined city of Ani, on the banks of the Arpa Tchai River. These latter subsequently disappeared and we were at a loss to account for their destination. In the afternoon the Marshal and his staff rode to the summit of Aladja to reconnoitre, but nothing could be made out. The 11th passed without incident save the continued shelling of Lakırdı Tepe by the heavy gun on Kızıl Tepe. On the 13th the Russians made a reconnaissance towards Kars, and some heavy firing took place in

of drifting vapour which nothing but constant practice could distinguish from the mist lines of these lofty hills. Another look, and slender creeping lines were visible on the distant slopes. Here was the explanation of the disappearance of the Russian reinforcements. The enemy, having made a long *détour* from the camp of Karajal, turning our right flank by Ani and Dighur, had marched parallel to the rear of our position, and were actually attacking the rear of our left flank. The Marshal and his staff were already on the hill whence proceeded the cannonade. The Russians had occupied a lofty hill to the north-west, where they had placed a couple of batteries. Some Turkish battalions despatched across the valley were furiously assailing the flank of the enemy's line of march, and the latter were replying from their upper positions. It was easy to distinguish the lines of fire. The Turks, as usual, plied their Martini-Peabody rifles with a zeal that streaked the hill with one snowy line of palpitating smoke. The Russians, as usual, fired with deliberation. I could almost count the rifle shots on their side, though the force they deployed was fully equal to that of the attack. The enemy's artillery was principally engaged shelling Turkish forces further on towards what turned out to be the objective point. Till near sunset the combat continued, the Russian columns still streaming onward, apparently heedless of the serried volleys and file-firing of their adversaries. The Turks, who it seemed numbered eight battalions, together with seven despatched from Bayazid, and three squadrons of irregular cavalry, finding themselves worsted, commenced retiring towards the extremity of the hill range next Kars. The sun set redly beyond the distant summits, and with its rays the fire of the combatants died out.

The Russians had advanced half way from the higher hill whence they had commenced to the final conical hill which terminated abruptly in the flat valley. Mukhtar Pacha, deeming the day's fighting over, turned rein and rode with his staff over the long slopes leading to his headquarters. I, too, was tired. I turned my horse to graze, and, lying down on the scant yellow grass, gazed on the scene of conflict. A quarter of an hour passed, and streaks of fire were seen issuing from the point to which the Russians had advanced. I couldn't make it out at first. Little by little these streaks increased in number, and the terminal hill seemed all ablaze with bursting projectiles. But there was no sound of artillery. The enemy was bombarding the position with Congreve rockets. The fire was so rapid that the sky was all ablaze. At least sixty per minute were discharged. To me they

towards the south eastern extremity of the oval. At the same point it throws out a large spur to the southward. Both the summit and this spur were strongly entrenched, and occupied by eight or ten battalions and some batteries of field artillery. The bulk of the Turkish forces occupied the lower portions of the northern slope, and numbered from thirty-five to forty thousand regular troops. On the extreme right (east) is a flat topped hill, named Lâkırdı Tepe, and on the left a similar one, Evlâtepeşi (the Awlis Hill), which, as will be seen later on, played an important part in the fighting. To the north of Aladja is an immense plain, the mouth of the Kars Valley. To the east of this plain are the isolated hills of Kıryal, Kızıl Tepe, and Utch Tepe, all three in the possession of the enemy at the commencement of the fighting. Towards Kars, that is westward, the plain is bounded by two hills, the greater and lesser Yagmı. The greater Yagmı is midway between Evlâtepeşi and the lesser Yagmı, and, as I have already stated, was occupied by the Russians after our retrograde movement of the 8th instant. The other two hills were in our hands, and strongly entrenched. Continuing the line formed by these three hills to the south of the western extremity of Aladja are three similar isolated hills, one exactly opposite the long end of the Aladja oval. Then comes a large plain like valley, and beyond, at some eight miles distance, a chain of mountains gradually lessening in height towards Kars, and slightly oblique to Aladja.

I passed the 14th in comparative tranquillity, watching the huge shells from the Russian guns of position burst on the devoted crest of Evlâtepeşi and in the Marshals group of tents. The enemy's troops were swarming below—moving incessantly. The insects of a disturbed ant hill could not have shown greater activity. Far out in the long dreamy plain where distance seemed annihilated by the glassy atmosphere, the Cossacks trooped and trained towards the wide opening between the Yagmı hills, evidently watching the Kars valley lest any unforeseen advent of reinforcements might derange the storm about to burst on us. It was half past two in the afternoon as field glass in hand, I strolled leisurely on the hill crest above the ambulance. The eye ranged far and wide over a tract of plain on either side which it would be a long day's journey to traverse. The boom of a gun from one of the mamelons to the south of Aladja attracted my attention. "Some stray Cossacks," I said to myself, and I turned my glass to the northern plain. Another boom, and another, and then the long rattle of musketry. This time my accustomed eye perceived the long white line

upwards from the frosty turf, torn into a black circle by the shell. Another projectile whistled over my head and burst against the rocks beyond. Every one in the ambulance was astir. We were being deliberately shelled. Dr. Casson, half dressed, was having his sick and wounded carried on litters higher up the mountain, out of range of the 16-centimetre projectiles. His colleague, the young volunteer doctor, was prostrate after the reaction of a severe typhoid attack. I had leaped to horse as the second projectile burst, and never shall I forget that poor feeble young man lying among the bare, bleak rocks in the grey mountain air, as I galloped by. If the Russians fired deliberately on the ambulance, it was a piece of atrocity. I can scarce believe it was so. For four days the ambulance was in the same place and was respected, although well in range of the heavy guns. On the morning in question the ambulances were still in the same place, but the ridiculously small flags against which I had remonstrated the day before, hung heavily against the masts. It may be that the officers and gunners of the battery were relieved, and that the new comers were unaware of the nature of our camp. If not, the thing was a piece of unparalleled barbarism.

Seeing that the projectiles continued to fall within the ambulance, I rode hurriedly away to get out of range. Mukhtar Pacha, accompanied by General Sir Arnold Kemball, came sweeping by. I rode after them, and together we mounted the steep hill at the western extremity of Aladja. A battalion already occupied the heights, sheltering behind some scanty earthworks. The Marshal sat under cover of a parapet and ate his frugal breakfast. Already in the plain below, to the east towards Subatan, the enemy was swarming in thousands, and still the heavy guns fired incessantly on Evliatepessi. Twenty times the ground on the top of this unfortunate hill was ploughed up in a manner to render it difficult to understand how any troops could exist within the crowning redoubt. It was seven o'clock when the Russian attack developed itself. Some ten battalions were seen advancing between the two deep ravines which seam the plain. In advance came two batteries of eight guns each, a third in reserve. At half-past seven the artillery opened fire on Evliatepessi, the shells falling with an accuracy which contrasted strongly with previous artillery fire. The two heavy guns near Hadji Veli continued their terrible fire, each shell falling right in the middle of the redoubt. On Evliatepessi, an isolated hill blocking the road between the two ravines, the shells rained incessantly. Behind the Russian guns the attacking force

seemed to burst much too high to do any execution unless the herds were charged with bullets. Then I saw long lines of flickering fire go up the hill, parallel to the crest of flame that crowned the crest. Half a dozen times these fiery lines approached and recoiled. Then they mingled, then came a pause. Rocket and musketry fire ceased. I judged that the Russians had taken the hill. Turkish officers laughed at me, told me the position was impregnable, but I retired to my tent with sad misgivings. I ordered everything to be packed and the horses saddled ready for any contingency. I said to myself, if the enemy has captured that hill, they are between us and Kars, and to-morrow's dawn must see a desperate conflict. I couldn't sleep. I went to the tent of Dr. Crisson, where he watched beside his sick colleague. We talked over the immediate prospects. He was very uneasy. I told him I believed a retreat was imminent, and that should the Russians have captured the terminal hill behind us, we should have to retreat on the morrow over a slender strip of ground swept by the enemy's fire. While we were speaking two battalions went by in the dark, followed by long trains of waggons. Then came artillery, caissons and pack mules, and long lines of baggage camels succeeded. It was a procession without end. Long into the night the cavalcade passed us by. It was evident a retreat had commenced, and yet no orders for the ambulance had arrived. Dr. Crisson called up the officer attached to the ambulance and sent him with his dragoman to headquarters to know what should be done. In half an hour the man returned to say that the headquarters had shifted its place under the incessant shell fire of the two heavy guns in the plain, and that it now occupied the place of the commissariat department already retiring. Mules were being waited for to bear off the baggage of the officers, and then the staff would retire. Timely notice would be given. We waited on through the dreary hours of the night. No one could sleep, for it was evident a crisis was imminent. Night hung darkly over the long weird mountain slopes. Not a star was visible in the inky expanse above. All was still, save the faint jingling of the artillery horses going by, and when from time to time the thundering roll of the Russian heavy guns followed the lightning like flash in the plain below, and the heavy shells went screaming hoarsely to Lvhatepassi, and the former site of the staff.

I had retired to my tent and sunk into an uneasy slumber. A thundering detonation roused me. A heavy shell had burst within twenty yards of my tent. I sprang to my feet and rushed from the tent. The white smoke was still curling

Russians established in rear of our left flank opened fire. The line of retreat was all but impassable. Lingerings convoys still struggled over the stony surface; and a couple of battalions, with a haste scarcely dignified, were making for Sivritepe. I must here state that through all the confusion which followed, Mukhtar Pacha bore himself like a true soldier, retiring only when his soldiers left him no other choice. The irregular cavalry, principally composed of Arabs from Orfa and Aleppo, fled in disorder as the first shells burst over them, retiring *pêle-mêle* behind Sivritepe.

At this juncture the Russians made a general advance in front by Evliatepessi, and on our right flank from the positions won on the preceding evening. There was no further resistance. The battalions occupying the forts on Sivritepe fled in disorder. As I looked on them from a distance, I could scarce believe it was infantry I saw in such a disordered crowd. I supposed for the moment the fugitives were spectators or else Bashi-Bazouks. A few minutes undeceived me. They were Nizams, the infantry of the line. Nearer and nearer advanced the Russian batteries in front and flank. I left the commanding ridge of the plain on which I stood, and made for our last position, the hill of Vezinkoi, not far from Kars. This is an isolated hill in the plain, and takes its name from a ruined Armenian village close under its brow. Here, around a large water reservoir, were accumulated the waggons, mules, and camels of the commissariat sent off the night before from Aladja. Some four thousand irregular cavalry and panic-stricken infantry were mixed up with the ox-waggons and camels. It was a scene of utter confusion. A reserve battalion of regular troops, deployed in open order with fixed bayonets, prevented the runaways from flying to Kars. Nearer and nearer thundered the Russian guns, and each detonation thrilled the disorganized mass with terror. It was only by a stratagem I got through the blocking line of infantry. The road to Kars was cumbered with ox-waggons, baggage, mules, and what was supposed to be their escort. All were running at full speed. The oxen galloped like horses. The mules cartered madly; and often when their burdens slipped from their backs, the frightened conductors went on, not daring to lose time in picking up their charge. The panic was complete. A mile farther on was a line of infantry with levelled rifles, threatening all runaways; and, as I myself saw, firing repeatedly on those who sought to get off by a side movement. It was with the greatest difficulty I got through this second line.

As I neared Kars the guns of the lower forts were firing on

opened out, and presently took the advance of the guns. At the same time another column, with one battery, passed between the assailed position and the greater Yagm Hill, attacking at right angles to the main force. At half past nine the first musketry fire was heard, and from that moment the dull roar of small arms was continuous. The entire plateau on the summit of Evhatepessi was one cloud of dense white smoke which reeled and palpitated with bursting shells and the fire of the three guns of the defence. Four battalions—some two thousand men—held the trenches below the crest. The Russian columns crept nearer and nearer, and the artillery was close enough to be under musketry fire. At last came a moment when the gradually lessening fire of the defence showed how fatally the Russian fire was telling. Mukhtar Pacha ordered up a battery from the rear to sweep the front of the hill with its fire.

The critical moment had arrived. We had at least twenty battalions in the old positions and on the summits of Aladja. The hill attacked Evhatepessi commanded the line of retreat; this once lost the forces on Aladja were cut off. Seeing the gradually lessening fire of Evhatepessi and deeming its capture inevitable as we had not a single battalion to send to its relief, I determined to leave the hill where the General and his staff were placed, and seek safer quarters. I rode across the stony plain towards Sivritepe, a triple hill to the rear strongly intrenched and armed with artillery. As I rode towards this point, I noticed that the enemy from the positions in rear of our left, where they had established themselves on the preceding evening were already firing on the road yet cumbered with waggons and mules. I turned to the right to get out of range of the shells and there in the plain met an enormous crowd of Bashî Bazouks on horseback, Circassians, Kurds and Arabs. They were brandishing their lances, whirling their matchlock guns and otherwise conducting themselves in a seemingly warlike manner. I halted among them on the ridge which divides the Kars plain at this point. At one o'clock the Russians carried Evhatepessi by assault, after four hours and a half of infantry combat. At this juncture the Marshal left the hill on which he had stood since morning. Scarcely five minutes elapsed after the capture of Evhatepessi when the Russian field batteries covered by a cloud of Cossacks, dashed forward between the captured position and the greater Yagm Hill. The fire of the two or three batteries thus brought into action swept obliquely the only line of retreat left to the Aladja troops, and at the same moment the

owed. At dawn I was on foot. Patrols lined the narrow streets, seeking to collect the scattered soldiery. The Marshal dared not show himself in the streets. Some even said he was killed. By midday I had made up my mind. It was evident that Kars was about to be besieged, and that not a moment was to be lost if I wished to escape. Long before daybreak on the following morning I was on my way, accompanied by my old companion, M. Le May, of the *Paris Temps*. Before I leave Kars I must mention the parting words of Dr. Casson, who remained behind to take care of his sick colleague. "Will you," he said, "thank the Stafford House Committee for their aid?—but I wish you to say that the supplies sent by Colonel Loyd-Lindsay were by far the most practical and best selected of any I have received." The doctor seemed to take the idea of the siege lightly enough. He had something to do, and that seemed for him an all-sufficing reason. For just the same reason, and because a blockade in Kars would have left me with all the news for myself, and without occupation for the readers of the *Daily News*, I resolved on an immediate retreat. I chose a trusty Moslem guide, who looked upon every Russian as a son of Sheitan. "On my head and my eyes be it," he said, "if I do not bring you through the Russian lines." Before daylight, away over the hills towards the opening of the Olti valley. Every kilometre the anxious question was heard, "Have you met the Cossacks?" Answer—"There is cavalry ahead, we don't know what they are." Three hours' ride and a long gorge opens away towards the flat of the Kars valley. Horsemen dot the plain. "Cossacks!" every one exclaimed, and we hurry away, *ventre à terre*, hotly pursued. Three men are hard at my heels. Seeing the crescents glittering on the pursuers' housings, "Selam alik," I said, turning rein. "Ou alikoum el Selam," was the reply. They were Circassians, as much on the look-out for the Russians as myself. To say that we were fatigued would be nought. For fourteen hours and a half we toiled over rocky summits, for we dared not go down into the plain below. I made the last couple of miles on foot, amid a storm of thunder and sleet and rain. I staggered into the village of Bashkoi, beyond the village of Hadja Kaké. The latter is the important village of the district, but we dare not halt there for fear of the Cossacks, who, the villagers told us, were sure to come that evening for forage. I was announced in the village as the "English Pacha," and the best hovel of the place was put at my disposal. The poor Kurd villagers (who, by the way, under other circumstances, would have complacently cut one's throat) swarmed round me for protection and information. I was

bands of fugitive cavalry. At first I believed it was on adventurous Cossacks, and my belief was strengthened on seeing sabres flashing in the setting sun, plied amid the hurrying crowd. The idea crossed my mind that the confused column of fugitives had been assailed by the enemy's cavalry. My field-glass, however, showed me the red fuzzes of the cavaliers, and I rode on a hundred paces, and was abreast with the cavalry. A revolver was thrust into my face, and I was commanded to turn again to the field of battle. It was the Colonel Hussein Bey who thus threatened me. He is a man of considerable animal courage, if I can believe the stories which reach me, but on this occasion seemed to have lost his head altogether. "Colonel," I said in French, "don't you know me? I am an Englishman and a newspaper correspondent." "I don't care who you are, it is perfectly equal to me," he said, "turn, or I blow your brains out." A dozen bayonets were at my breast, as many soldiers struck my horse with their musket butts. Of course I turned. It was not a time for explanation. Still, I turned again, and remembering that Hussein Bey had received English hospitality for seven years, I added, "Colonel, you will have reason to remember this. Your coward troops are flying before the Russians, and you wish to force me back into the panic stricken crowd." Same answer as before—and, knowing from hearsay the temper of the man, I said no more, but went on into the dire tumult where Kurd lancer and Arab cavalry were mixed together in hopeless confusion. An officer, a major, came dashing by carrying despatches. He was one of Mukhtar Pacha's aides de camp. I appealed to him. A few explanatory words followed with the colonel. 'Pass, English correspondent,' he said, "one of those people who come to earn money in our country. Some bitter words rose to my lips, but in view of the situation I held my tongue and rode on towards Kars. At the gate was a double guard. 'No one enters here,' was the word. "Where is the Pacha?" I demanded furiously, utterly worn out with imbecile Turkish foolery. The word Pacha is enough to bring most Moslems to their knees, and I was shown into a neighbouring fort, where a half blind old man, who scurily looked at me, told me I might go. Colonel Hussein Bey, five minutes after our meeting, fled for his life. When he bullied me he had no idea the Russian battalions were so near.

The confusion within Kars was indescribable. I believe that if the enemy had assaulted at that moment the town was his without even the semblance of a struggle. A heavy slumber, consequent on the weary watching of preceding nights, fol-

army of Kars. Eleven thousand men had been left at Kars, with the few field pieces remaining; and we were retiring with what was left of the army in the field, dragging ten mountain guns over the muddy ways. I left Mukhtar Pacha with his scanty force on the slopes of the Soghanli Daghl. He seemed to hope to be able to effect a junction with Ismail Pacha coming from Bayazid. Meantime, all is panic here. The waggons for Trebizond are so laden with fugitive women that no place is left for men.

- ERZEROUH, *November 3rd.*—I am not a Turk, and yet I can't help echoing the talk of a good many Mussulmans here. "Why were we defeated at Aladja?" they ask. That, I take it, is a question few could answer, perhaps not even the Commander-in-Chief. I know the General intimately. He excuses his want of success by the runaway conduct of his soldiers. "I could see no reason for their flight," he said to me on the memorable evening when, at the village of Bashkoi, we sat together all the night long. Yet it seems pretty simple. The Russians were numerous; our flank was turned; and nothing remained but retreat. For me, as well as for many other spectators, the question was why the retreat was commenced only at ten o'clock P.M. And then, why were the baggage and artillery horses sent away? One would have said, under such peculiar circumstances as surrounded that total defeat, why not send off that which was most precious, the army first, and afterwards the sacks of corn of the *Idaret* (Commissariat). It matters but little now why all this was not done. There are other considerations still more important. I have already described the fight as I saw it, standing side by side with the Commander-in-Chief; and afterwards as I saw it from a point which, from prudential reasons, I thought it best to occupy, when the critical moment had arrived, and when nothing but desperation could have retained a general on such ground as Mukhtar Pacha occupied that day. Now that all is comparatively over, and that the Russians are at the very gates of Erzeroum, people begin to find fault with Ghazi (Victorious) Mukhtar Pacha. They ask why, during the decisive combat, were the battalions of our army left behind on the summit of Aladja. Why did we lose seven generals and forty-two pieces of artillery—not twenty-five, as I wrote in my last letter, not wishing to exceed the possible loss? All this is incomprehensible for the moment. The fact remains, that of an army of eighty-five battalions and some seventy-two guns, we have only straggling, disorganized troops and stray cannon. No one

tired to death with my fourteen hours ride, but I managed by the light of the blazing fire logs to indite the copy from which this letter is written. The pen had dropped from my hand, I was utterly overcome with weariness, when loud noises were heard outside. Every one was afoot grasping his arms. My impression was that we were surprised by the enemy's cavalry. I rushed towards the door. Judge of my surprise—I almost upset Mukhtar Pacha himself. Behind him stalked General Sir Arnold Kemball, as grave as usual. 'What you here?' the Marshal said. "Your Excellency," I replied, "I am a fugitive, before the bad weather and the fortune of war." The night was glacial. A great fire of pine logs from the Soghanli Dagħ blazed on the primitive hearth. How strange was that night. Some cold meat was produced and a kettle of tea was made. A general silence pervaded the *oda*. No one wished to be the first to speak. It was the respect one naturally pays to misfortune. Mukhtar Pacha turned to me abruptly and said, "What do you think of the enemy's artillery fire during the battle?" "Excellency, I said and I felt a little shy about giving my true opinion, "I think the Russian artillery fire was very good indeed." "Yes," said the Marshal, "that was the grand point where they beat us. It was the old story of France and Prussia. Two days before the battle I sent spies into the Russian camp. They told me that one hundred and thirty young officers had arrived. I don't know to what nationality they belonged but to them I attribute the excellence of the fire which beat us." The Marshal paused, and then with a smile he said to me, "This is the second time you have seen me beaten. You remember Verbitza?" I certainly did remember Verbitza, in Herzegovina when the Montenegrins almost destroyed the Turkish army. "Excellency, I ventured to ask "what may be our losses in the late fight?" The Marshal replied immediately, "We have lost twelve thousand prisoners, the loss in killed and wounded I don't know. Since then I have learned our losses. Over twelve thousand infantry prisoners five thousand killed and wounded. Twenty five guns captured, with seven Pachas, named as follows—Hadji Rechid Pacha, commanding 1st Division, Hassan Pacha, Chief of Staff, Omer Pacha, General of Division, 3rd Division, Shefket Pacha, commanding 2nd Division, Nadjeb Pacha, General of Brigade, Mustapha Pacha, Division General, Omer Pacha, Hungarian Brigade General. At dawn we continued our dreary retreat over the dark mountain slopes, where the poor wearied soldiers had slept all night long amid the wet grass. Two thousand and eight hundred men constituted the remnant of the

in force over the plateau of Khorumdusi, retreated with all his force to the plain of Hassan Kaleh. The same night his rear-guard was assailed, and he was forced to fall back on the position of Deve-Boyun (the Camel's-neck Defile), the last line covering Erzeroum. On the morning of the 29th the Russians were camped in the plain at the village of Khoredjuka, within cannon-shot of the guns of position in the Turkish redoubts. Only yesterday I counted their tents, and saw the Cossacks roving over the plain within three hours' march of Erzeroum.

At the commencement of the campaign I gave a *résumé* of the Turkish lines of defence. To show the present situation I recapitulate briefly. After Kars and its positions further east—those of Aladjä, the scene of the terrible fighting and defeat on the 15th—come three distinct positions, where an army can make head against considerably superior forces—Khorumdusi (the scene of Mukhtar's victory), a plateau adjoining the village of Zevin, and two long days' march from Erzeroum, the lines of Kuprikoi, commanding the junction of the Bayazid, Kars, and Erzeroum roads, and the Deve-Boyun heights covering the last pass leading to the capital of Armenia. We were driven from Aladjä; we fled past Khorumdusi, and we abandoned Kuprikoi for want of sufficient men to defend it. The enemy is at the very gates of Erzeroum. Deve-Boyun once lost, Erzeroum must soon go with it. The population of the town, Mussulmans as well as Christians, say plainly they don't want a bombardment, and will make no defence. The army, such as it is, some fifteen thousand demoralized soldiers, with a crowd of motley Bashi-Bazouks from Bayazid and Toprakaleh, cannot shut itself up here. That would be to leave the whole of Armenia in the invaders' hands, and to entail its own inevitable surrender. Hence the energy with which the all-important pass is being fortified. The one spare field battery has been sent from Erzeroum, and is being distributed among the different redoubts. Some batteries of mountain guns make a fair show at advanced points, and the hill-sides are being furrowed with intrenchments. The pass of Deve-Boyun is a narrow valley, leading due east from Erzeroum to the wide plain of Hassan Kaleh, the latter an old-fashioned Turkish town, near which are the fountains of the Araxes. The pass is skirted by rounded hills, and near its eastern extremity is crossed by a ridge which constitutes the second line of defence. Then comes a deep, precipitous ravine, and immediately beyond another ridge. On this is situated the headquarters of the army. It is the link between the hills which form the first and principal lines. Opposite its centre, slightly to the left,

can say what was the idea of the Commander in Chief. It is to be hoped he had an idea at present however, all is obscure. Together with the remnant of the army, 2800 men and ten mountain guns we fled from Kars. I left the General at Yenikoi a village not far from the celebrated field of Khorumdusi. It was a sad wet day. The long white fog clouds veiled the surrounding hills, and the wretched, barefooted soldiers drenched to the skin came straggling in no one knowing where to go for his quarters. The Russians might have been close on our heels for aught any one knew to the contrary and yet the Turkish troops were *pile mele* in the village without an idea of defensive preparations. It didn't matter much, perhaps. Two thousand eight hundred men more or less couldn't be of great importance in such a struggle.

I found the Marshal occupying my old quarters in the Konak or principal house of the village. He was tranquil and composed as ever. The idea of Kismet never deserted him. I came to ask an order for some house in which I could remain for a couple of hours to dry my soaked garments and partake of a little food. The troops filled nearly every available hovel and I was more than delighted when an aide de camp found me a kind of hay loft where I could eat the thick sour milk and leathery bread which was the only food obtainable. Knowing the free and the inhabitants had hidden war articles save that which they food. It was three o'clock in the afternoon as I mounted my horse amid a down-pour of rain. General Sir Arnold Kemball and his aide de camp rode by telling me they were en route for a village twenty miles farther on. Two hours weary stambling over mountain gullies and along the banks of a flooded river brought me to the village of Kara Urgan. Not a soul was left in the place and amid the falling shades of night I pushed on to Zevin. There every one was picking up and I was glad to find shelter in a kind of aboriginal hut and luxuriate on a supper of sour milk and honeycomb. Then two days ride to Erzeroum. Meantime Mukhtar Pacha retained his position at Yenikoi sending two aides de camp to discover the whereabouts of Ismail Pacha retreating from Bayazid. They brought back word that the latter General who on the 24th had left of Zeidikan was menaced by a considerable Russian force coming from the north. A slight encounter took place, and Ismail succeeded in reaching Kuprikoi uniting his eight thousand men with the three battalions at that place. On the 28th, Mukhtar, ascertaining that the Russians were advancing

fate. In Erzeroun a panic prevails. A large number of persons refuse to open their shops, all business is at a standstill, and every day hundreds of women crowd the waggons going to Erzingan and Trebizond.

CHAPTER XX.

INVESTMENT OF PLEVNA AND FALL OF KARS.

Arrival of the Guard before Plevna—Completion of Divisions from the Reserve—General Gourko on the Orkanieh-Plevna Road—Capture of Gorny Dubnik, Teliche and Dolny Dubnik—Completion of the Investment—Osman Pacha's Position—Turkish Prisoners of War—Condition of Kars—Artillery Attack on the Fortress—Capture of Fort Hafiz Pacha—Summons to surrender—Defiant Refusal—Grand Assault on Kars—Capture of the Fortress and Garrison, Guns and Stores—Rejoicings at Plevna.

THE failure of the third attack on Plevna had convinced the Grand Duke Nicholas that he had no longer anything to hope from a repetition of those headlong front attacks upon earthworks in which, until that time, all the art of his staff had consisted, while it was only too evident that the tremendous losses sustained before Plevna were seriously affecting the *morale* of the soldiers. It was therefore resolved to call for the aid of the skilful officer of engineers who had designed the defence of Sebastopol, and also to await the arrival of the new troops who were by this time well on their way. Whether the necessity of completing the investment of Plevna was foreseen when General Todleben was sent for is uncertain, but it was recognized soon after he arrived in the camp, when also the weekly appearance of new troops promised to furnish before long the means of completing the blockade. Osman Pacha, having repulsed the last and greatest attack upon his position, showed himself anxious for the despatch of supplies and reinforcements. General Kriloff, as we have already seen, had been sent with a strong body of cavalry to guard the road from Orkhanieh to Plevna, but proved lamentably unequal to the task. On the 21st September Ahmed Hifzi Pacha set out from Orkhanieh with a convoy of fifteen battalions, a battery of eight guns,

is a long hill, crowned by a steeply bounded plateau, narrow like the hill itself. It is strongly intrenched, and forms the centre of the defence. To its right are two conical hills, somewhat oblique to the front, on which are two redoubts, armed with guns of position, and occupied by several battalions. To the left of the long hill is a rounded mamelon, projecting spur like from the lofty mountains which fringe the plain. From this mamelon long trenches extend further east, intended to secure our left flank. In front of all run two rivulets, which uniting, form one of the tributaries of the Araxes. In case of need, a large portion of the front could be inundated by blocking the course of these streams. From every point of view the line is exceedingly strong, and, unless I am much mistaken the Russians will not try to carry it by direct attack. But it has its weak points, which, to my mind, are fatal. To the north is the valley of Olti, parallel to the pass, to the south another similar valley coming from the direction of Bayazid, and both debouching into the plain before Erzeroum. These valleys are separated from the plain of Hassan Kaleh by lofty mountains, at this season heavily covered with snow. By either of the valleys the enemy can turn the formidable barrier in their path and our latest intelligence informs us that they are doing so. During my visit to the positions of Deve Boyun yesterday, I had a conversation with Faizi Pacha, chief of the staff. He admitted the danger of the situation, while informing me that both these avenues of attack were occupied by our troops. "We hope too," he said "to be able to link these forces on our flank with the centre." I am afraid however, that the scanty Turkish army, fronted as it is by a formidable Russian force camped within cannon shot on the plain in front, can scarcely afford the necessary troops to guard the lateral avenues. Conscious of this weakness, we are taking measures to inundate the opening of the Olti valley at a point close to the city named Gurji Boghas, close to the village of Hindsk. The Cossacks, coming by way of Olti and Nahrman, are already reported within view of these new defences. Then again, there is the road leading from the Olti valley to Baiburt, by which, without the necessity of striking a blow, the enemy can cut our communications with Trebizond and the Black Sea coast. It is probably with a view of hindering this movement, for which a few squadrons of cavalry alone would suffice, that the long promised reinforcements, if they really exist, have, as we are told, arrested their march at Baiburt. Meantime, with our fourteen or fifteen thousand men, the sum of the united fragments of Mukhtar's and Ismail's armies, we await our

regarded as complete. The Russian cavalry now made excursions over a large extent of country south of Plevna, capturing the Turks' supplies, who since the loss of the road to Plevna had been counting on an army of relief to be formed at Orkhanieh. They took Teteven, near Orkhanieh, and Vratza, and then Etropol, within ten miles of Orkhanieh itself. The following letters relate to these transactions:—

† BUCHAREST, *October 26th*.—The news has just been received here of the fight on the Sofia road. The Turks had fortified a position there between Gorny Dubnik and Teliche, and it was here, it will be remembered, that General Kriloff tried to stop Chefket Pacha's convoy by attacking a fortified position with cavalry and artillery instead of the convoy itself. The Turks have evidently been trying to reopen their communications by establishing a number of small forts along the Sofia road. This was one of them, and as it was probably too near the Russian line to be convenient they took it, as they will undoubtedly take any others there may be this side of the Balkans. The Russians have 3,000 prisoners, one regiment of cavalry, and four guns. The fighting, it is said, was hard, and the Russian losses considerable.

A Russian officer just returned from the positions before Plevna gives me the following account of affairs there. It is untrue that the Turks have succeeded in getting any supplies of provisions into Plevna lately. No convoy has succeeded in getting through since about the time that General Gourko took command of the cavalry. The investment of Plevna has been complete now for about a week; that is, an investment with the aid of infantry. As fast as the soldiers of the Imperial Guard arrived they took up their position on the Russian left, where General Skobelev stands with the 16th Division, continuing the line of investment over the Loftcha road, on to the Sofia road, and further round as fast as the troops arrived.

There is a large force of infantry on and near this road, and the line is continued from here to the Roumanian right by the Russian and Roumanian cavalry under the command of General Gourko. The investment is therefore complete, and it is evident from the manner in which it has been done, and from so much infantry being sent behind Plevna, that the Russian plan looks farther than merely obliging Osman Pacha to withdraw from Plevna. In fact, if it were merely a question of stopping supplies, a large force of cavalry under General Gourko would have sufficed. It is true he could not

and a long train loaded with provisions and ammunition. The train advanced slowly, but Kulooff so little understood what he had to do that it entered Plevna without the loss of a single waggon Kulooff taking credit in his report for not having lost a man in opposing its progress. A second convoy reached Osman Pacha in like manner as a third would have done had not the Roumanians interfered and captured it. An end however was soon to be put to these displays of Russian helplessness. The Guard had arrived and the ranks of the battalions which had fought during the summer had been filled up. General Gourko who since his retreat to the Shipka Pass had not been actively employed now received orders to assume the command of a strong cavalry force and to take possession of the Orkhanieh road. His arrival on the scene was the signal for activity of a most productive kind. The first intimation of his advent was the announcement that he had captured the position of Gorny Dubnik the centre of the principal Turkish defences on the Orkhanieh road. The place was strongly intrenched with a large redoubt of four hundred yards flanked by two smaller works. It was held by twelve battalions of Turks and was attacked by twenty-four battalions with sixty-four guns and a regiment of cavalry. The fighting lasted from six A.M. to six P.M. when the Turks hoisted the white flag five of their battalions escaped to Plevna while seven surrendered. This success cost the Russians 154 officers and 1000 men. On the same day a division of the Guards sent against Teliche a fortified position west of Gorny Dubnik suffered a severe repulse. Teliche however was captured on the 29th of October when five battalions surrendered after a feeble resistance. On the 1st of November, Dolny Dubnik east of Gorny Dubnik was taken. It was held by 5000 Turks under a Pacha and was fairly intrenched but when General Gourko advanced against it with a division and a half and sixty-four guns and opened a cannonade, followed by rifle firing the Turks leaving the road to Plevna open to them abandoned the place. General Gourko not losing a man. With the occupation of Dolny Dubnik the road from Plevna to Sofia through Orkhanieh was closed, and the investment of Plevna was

tely faced, the prospect is more hopeful for the Russians than at any time since General Krüdener's defeat in July.

BUCHAREST, *October 28th.*—The battle at Gorny Dubnik seems to have been a more serious affair as regards fighting than I could at first have supposed. When General Kriloff was there there was only a small earthwork, which the Turks appeared to have constructed in haste as a sufficient obstacle to cavalry, but one that would not have stopped a strong force more than a few minutes. The Turks must have strengthened and reinforced it since then. It is situated near the road in the middle of a plain, on a very slight eminence, and possesses no natural advantages of position. As the Turks have established a line of these posts to keep open the road, they cannot put a large number of troops in any one of them without weakening the army in Plevna. They probably had five or six thousand men here, yet the Russians acknowledge a loss of twenty-five hundred men, which shows the terrible effects of breech-loading arms properly handled. Nevertheless the Russians took it, and as they surrounded the place before attacking it no part of the garrison could escape. All were either killed or taken prisoners.

As the Russians report that two thousand prisoners were taken, the Turkish loss would probably be between three and four thousand killed. The result of the affair is to show that the Turks cannot keep the road open by this system of small detached forts. There has been a rumour here that the Turks have recaptured part of the positions; but this I do not credit. The Turks could not have a large force near there, and, as there are two divisions of the Guard over the River Vid, it is not likely that the Turks could have recaptured anything from them.

BOGOR, *November 4th.*—The belief here that Plevna cannot hold out more than a few days longer is very strong. No supplies have reached the place for more than a month, and it is invested by a circle of earthworks manned by forces that are growing stronger every day with the arrival of troops from Russia.

The question now is, What will Osman Pacha do? It is pretty certain that he has no great amount of supplies, that his troops are suffering severe privations from hunger and cold, and that much depression and discontent prevail is evident from the number of deserters who come in daily. The easy surrender of Teliche after five hours of artillery fire is an ominous event which points to the same conclusion—that is, a scarcity of

have prevented the arrival of reinforcements, but with his artillery he could always smash the waggons, kill the horses of the train, and destroy the supplies, even if he could not capture them. Infantry was, therefore, not absolutely necessary on the other side of Plevna, and that such a strong force has been sent seems to point to the intention of the Russians not only to starve out Osman Pacha, but to cut off his retreat likewise. It is impossible to ascertain for exactly how long Plevna is provisioned, and it is probable that the Turks themselves do not know, but it is evident that, unless their supplies are sufficient for the whole winter, Ghazi Osman Pacha will soon be in a most critical position, one resembling somewhat that of Bazaine at Metz. We may suppose that Osman will show more patriotism, more generalship, and especially more tenacity than Bazaine, but it is evident that unless he has a much larger supply of provisions than is believed, he will soon be in a bad way.

The Russians are receiving reinforcements every day, and there is every appearance that they intend to surround Plevna as the Germans did Paris with a series of works, through which Osman will find as much difficulty in breaking as General Trochu did with the German intrenchments around Paris. Osman will have to fight his way out or surrender sooner or later, for the Russians will soon have enough troops to complete the investment by infantry, and make a circle of resistance as solid as that of the Germans around Paris. The only question is for how long is Osman Pacha supplied with provisions. As the Turks have had all summer in which to store up provisions in Plevna, there is really no good reason, except Turkish improvidence, why they should not have enough to last them until next spring, but there is every reason to believe that they have not so much. My informant thinks that the fact of the Turks having sent fifteen or twenty thousand men as reinforcements into Plevna some weeks ago, is evidence that they do not fear running short of supplies. But this by no means follows. In the first place, the reinforcements escorted large convoys of supplies, which would not have got through without an escort. Then, besides, the Turks could not know that a complete investment would be attempted, and may have hoped to prevent it. The arrival of the reinforcements, therefore, is no proof that there are plenty of provisions in Plevna. The appearances are that Osman will attempt to force out his way through the Russian lines sooner or later, and that the attempt will end in a disaster as complete as that of Mukhtar Pacha.

I must say, now, that the question of a second campaign is reso-

Russian line is weakest; but although this appears his greatest chance of success; perhaps that success, if attained, would be of little use; for while one half of the Russian army pursued him, the other half could cross the Balkans, and crush Chefket's small force at Sofia. Osman Pacha's object upon getting out should be to effect a junction with either Chefket, Reouf, or Suleiman, which would be impossible if he broke through on the Widdin side. The Sofia road and the line from the Loftcha road are held by the Guard. The Loftcha road is held by Skobelev, on ground which he has fought over twice. The passage cannot be effected except by the most desperate fighting and the most fearful losses. Should he attempt on the east to effect a junction with Suleiman, he would, supposing he succeeded in breaking through the Russian lines and earthworks, still have with the remnant of his army to meet the Army of the Jantra with the Grand Duke Nicholas on his back. Everything considered, I think Osman Pacha's chances are bad, unless he has three or four months' supply of provisions. Nevertheless, skill and energy might do wonders, if seconded by incapacity and stupidity on the other side. At any rate, the result of this Plevna campaign must be a great military event, and one of the highest interest. The weather is fairly good. There is rain and sunshine every day. The sky is clear nearly every night; the weather is warm; the roads are moderately good. Three days of rain or three days of sunshine would make them very bad or very good. There has been ten days of cold weather, during which the troops suffered severely, but now they are not badly off. The season of sickness has not yet begun, nor will it until the weather finally breaks up. This may not be until the first of December. Even then, should we be favoured by extreme cold and snow instead of rain, the health of the army would not suffer much.

The Russian reserve system seems to be working very well. General Skobelev tells me his division, which suffered so severely in Krüdener's defeat, and which also lost heavily at Pelisat and in the last Plevna affair, numbers 11,500 men. Little is doing here in the way of bombardment. Three or four times only during the day a great crash breaks against the sky, and comes rolling back to us in muffled thunder. It is caused by one hundred to three hundred guns speaking in unison, and concentrated upon a single spot. General Todleben has had all the distances divided into small sections. There are about four hundred guns in position around Plevna. From one hundred to all the four hundred can be concen-

provisions. They probably never thought that the Russians could completely invest Pleven, or only thought so lately, as was shown by their feeble attempt to keep open communications by building a line of small detached forts. Osman Pacha has no hope of relief from outside, and if he is as short of supplies as is believed here, he must ere long choose between surrendering at discretion or cutting his way through the Russian lines.

The Russians seem to think he will surrender, but I for my part have no doubt he will attempt to cut his way out. Whichever he chooses, the result will be a disaster to the Turkish arms. He can undoubtedly succeed in escaping with part of his army if he does not allow his troops to become too much weakened by hunger before making the attempt, but he will lose his artillery, which may not after all be worth much, as a great deal of it is disabled, and will lose more than half his army. His effective is now estimated at 45 000 men. After deducting for losses and sickness, if he reached Sofia with 20,000 he would be lucky, for it should be remembered that the Russians hold not only one point on the Sofia road but the whole road up to the summit of the Orkhanieh Pass, which is practicable, it seems, for an army. He will have to break through three lines of intrenchments, and although his troops are good in defending trenches, they are not so good in attacking them. If the Turks in trenches can repulse the Russians, the latter can much more easily repulse the Turks under the same circumstances.

The Russian lines are completely connected by a telegraph encircling the place, so that the Russians can concentrate immediately upon the point of the circle that is attacked. This is further facilitated by the peculiarity of the ground, which enables the Russians to see every part of the Turkish positions from some point in the Russian lines. Any concentration of the Turkish troops can therefore be seen and the numbers estimated, unless such concentration be made at night. Even then the exact numbers could be seen at daylight, as soon as the movement began, so that it is impossible for Osman Pacha to gain time by making feints. He will simply have to gather his troops together during the night, and throw them in a mass upon some point of the Russian lines at daylight, and get through. The result can hardly be less than disastrous, though less so, perhaps, than capitulation.

Much speculation is indulged in as to the direction in which Osman Pacha will try to break through. It seems more than likely he will attempt it by the Widdin road, where the

siderably. Their line has now been drawn right round the Turkish works everywhere, and the investment is more complete and effective than I had thought, as every part is occupied by infantry, no part being left to cavalry. From Grivica round to the Loftcha road the line is just where it was at the moment of giving the assault at the last attack on Plevna. The artillery occupies the ridge before Radisovo, with the guns extended down the line towards the Loftcha road to not more than a mile from Plevna. On the Loftcha road General Skobelev is not as far advanced as he was at the time he made his assault. The Turks, taking advantage of the moment after the battle when the Russians had withdrawn, and warned that they were not invulnerable here, have constructed four new redoubts, so that Skobelev now, instead of three redoubts, has seven before him. When Skobelev first attacked here, when Krüdener was defeated, he found no defences at all, and he entered Plevna but with only one battalion. His line is now considerably in front of a village called Brestovec. From here the line extends to the Vid. It then crosses the Sofia road about a mile from the bridge over the Vid. From here it passes parallel to the river until just below Opanes, where it again crosses the Vid, and curves round to the Grivica redoubt, about a mile in front of Grivica. The Russian line of investment is thirty miles long. The Turkish position measures from the Grivica redoubt to the bridge over the Vid eight miles; from the Krishine redoubt to the Bukova redoubt is about five miles. The line is of an irregular, oval shape, with a circumference of about twenty miles.

With the force the Russians have here now, 120,000 men, they can fill two lines of continuous trenches around the whole line of investment as full as it is convenient for men to lie in trenches. It will be seen, therefore, that Osman Pacha is surrounded by a circle which it will not be easy to break through. As to the supply of provisions, accounts continue to be contradictory, but since my last telegram a herd of about five or six thousand head of cattle, whose existence was not known before, has been discovered, by having been driven out to feed on the hills. Other indications point to the probability that Osman may hold out thirty or forty days yet, though not longer. His army is already on short rations, however. Ten soldiers receive two and a half pounds of meat daily between them, and the supply of corn and flour is not thought to be great. At any rate, whether Osman has supplies for one month or for three, the result must be the same in the end. He will have to surrender or cut his way out,

trated on any point of the Turkish positions, and whenever the Turkish reserves or any masses of troops can be detected anywhere, the guns are directed upon that spot, and a simultaneous fire is ordered by telegraph. For two or three hundred shells to fall in a small space, within a few seconds of each other, is fearful. This is the only way modern artillery can be made effective. The fire is sometimes concentrated on the redoubts, sometimes on the town in the same way. Had the artillery been handled in this way when assaulting the redoubts, it would have been useful. As no assault is intended now, it does little good, except when masses of troops are caught.

The Emperor arrived here yesterday, and went to Dornj Dubnik, on the Sofia road, accompanied by the Grand Duke Nicholas. They are to return to-morrow.

+ *BOGOR, November 4th, Evening*—Three detachments of prisoners passed through here to-day, counting in all perhaps 5,000 men. They were captured at the recent engagement on the Sofia road. One batch of officers came under a special guard, and bivouacked here for the night. There are 250 of them, including some who are said to be pachas, and one Englishman, who insists that he is a surgeon, but who is generally believed to have been an officer. His name I could not learn. Many of the officers are mounted. Some have pack horses, with quantities of effects. All are well dressed, and have no lack of warm clothing. They have plenty of money, which they spend freely for bread and tobacco, and seem on the whole, to be gratified with their fortune, which has brought them into the hands of the Russians. The soldiers are comfortably clothed, and appear well fed and healthy. These prisoners will be sent to Sistova, as was the batch of 3,000 which passed here two or three days ago. A very small escort accompanies them—almost ridiculously small, in fact—but they are quiet, and manifest no disposition to cause trouble.

+ *DOLNA DUBNIK, November 6th*—The Turks abandoned this place, lost the position they held on the Sofia road, and retreated into Plevna without firing a shot. The Russians were making dispositions to surround and capture the place as they did at Gornj Dubnik and Tichie. The Turks, seeing this, evacuated it at midnight. When the Russians advanced the next morning they did not find a soul.

It was the best thing the Turks could do, as it was evident the position could not be held. The capture of this place has enabled the Russians to shorten their line of investment con-

By the beginning of November the Russian army had not only been joined by all the new corps which had been summoned from Russia, but all the battalions before Plevna had been brought up to their full strength. Their girdle of investment was tightened by the Russians whenever any ground was to be gained. The following letter describes a struggle which grew out of a successful attempt in this direction made by General Skobelev:—

† GENERAL SKOBELEFF'S HEADQUARTERS, BRESTOVEC, LOITCHA ROAD, *November 10th.*—The monotony of the last few days has at last been broken by an affair which, although not of very great importance, has nevertheless kept us employed for the last twenty-four hours. As might be expected, the break in the monotony of our existence came from Skobelev, who is one of those restless spirits that cannot keep quiet. However, he had very good cause for action in the present case.

I have already described the Russian line of investment, mentioning with the rest Skobelev occupying his old positions on the Loitcha road. This is the only point on the line where the Russians do not hold the same ground as at the moment of the assault. After the battle of Plevna it was thought unsafe to remain here, and Skobelev was ordered to fall back on Tucenica, completely abandoning the Loitcha road, and placing an impassable ravine, which runs parallel to the road about a quarter of a mile distant from it, between him and the Turks. When he again advanced to occupy his old positions he found, as I have already stated, that the Turks had considerably advanced theirs, and had constructed four new redoubts. He succeeded, however, in occupying Brestovec, on the left of the road, and in constructing a redoubt in front and on the left of the village, and the line of trenches across the road to the ravine already mentioned. The Brestovec redoubt is just opposite the Turkish Krishine redoubt, from which it is distant about 1,300 yards. But this Brestovec redoubt forms a kind of angle projecting into the Turkish lines, and was somewhat exposed and dangerous. It became necessary to strengthen the Russian line. This could be done by seizing the small wooded hill immediately in front of the right wing between the Loitcha road and the ravine already spoken of.

It was most unfortunate for the Russians that these positions were ever abandoned, for they are about as high as the Krishine redoubt, they completely command Plevna, and the two

either of which will be such a disaster for the Turkish aims that Russia will be enabled to bring the war to a rapid conclusion. Turkey can never raise such another army as that of Osman Pacha and the loss of this army is now only a question of some weeks more or less. The Russians will stay here till Plevna falls and we think we already see the beginning of the end.

The soldiers have built for themselves very comfortable huts all along the line of positions and although they will undoubtedly suffer in case of a rainy winter they will be able to keep up the investment with ease. As to supplies the army on the west side of the Vid can live on the country between the Danube and the Balkans nearly up to the Serbian frontier by means of their cavalry. The country is rich in Indian corn wheat barley hay and straw. On the other side they will be supplied from Roumania and this can be done with ease. Everything considered the Russian prospects are brighter than they have been since last July and everybody feels it. The change of feeling since I was here last is very great. Much of this cheerfulness is I believe owing to the fact that such men as Todleben Gourko Skobelev and Imeretinski have come to the front and although not forming part of the staff have active parts in the direction of the war. But the great fact is that Osman is caught in his own net and cannot escape.

The inherent weakness of an army such as the Turkish that can only act on the defensive now becomes glaringly evident. If Osman's army could manoeuvre on the field of battle if it had discipline good officers tactical education enabling Osman to handle it as an army should be handled he would not undoubtedly allow his communications to be cut and himself to be shut up like a monster spider in his own web. He would have retired from Plevna before it was too late have refused battle against superior numbers but have hovered on the Russian right flank ready to strike at a favourable moment—a continual menace to the Russian communications. The enemy could never cross the Balkans as long as this army remained anywhere between Plevna and Widdin and with its back to the Balkans it could always have defied attack as easily as at Plevna. Such might have been the development of the campaign if Osman Pacha's army were like a European one capable of acting on the offensive of manoeuvring in the open country of executing rapid movements of striking swift heavy blows. As it is his troops can only sit in the trenches and shoot until they are all starved out like wild beasts.

vigilance that day. On the approach of darkness the roar of eighty guns was heard that vomited splashes of flame upon the murky fog, and then were silent. Then came the scream of eighty shells seeking their destination in the obscurity. Then there was the crash of the infantry fire along the whole line except on the point of the attack, for it was Skobelev's design to use the fog for cover and take the Turks by surprise. The infantry fire rolled along in front of Brestovec, where I had taken my station, and soon the bullets began singing overhead, telling that the Turks were replying; but we could hear as yet little firing on the right wing, where the attack was to take place. Finally, after about a quarter of an hour, there were two or three volleys in this direction, followed by a Russian shout, and we knew the position was carried.

As it turned out, the Turks were surprised, and did not discover the approach of the Russians until they were within one hundred yards. By the time they had seized their arms and fired two rounds, the Russians were on them with the bayonet, and it was all over. In a moment those who did not fly were bayoneted. The attack was led by two companies of sharpshooters, followed closely by the 9th Battalion and the Vladimirsky regiment. Every man was provided with a shovel, and immediately began making trenches, as indicated by Skobelev. In a very few minutes they were under cover from a heavy but ill-directed fire poured into them from the next hill, not distant more than 250 yards. Skobelev stayed until about ten o'clock, when he thought the men had made the place secure, and returned to Brestovec to supper. He had scarcely washed when the fire broke out again with fury on the right flank. Skobelev mounted again, disappeared in the darkness and fog, and did not return till this morning. He found the Turks making a desperate attempt to recapture the position, and arrived on the ground in the nick of time, as some confusion had ensued, for the reserves, who lost their way in the fog, coming in the wrong direction, got fired into from their own side. There was also a report that Skobelev was killed, which discouraged the troops. He arrived in the middle of the Turkish assault, one fellow having leaped into the trench with the cry of "Allah!" where he was bayoneted. The attack was repulsed, but the Turks made a second and third one, and each time were driven back with ease.

The position, if not taken within the next twenty-four hours, may be considered secure. The Russian loss was comparatively small, only 250 killed and wounded, among whom were two or three officers, one being Captain Dombrowsky, of the sharpshooters, of whom Skobelev speaks in the highest terms.

on the slope of this hill has been stationed the advanced picquets of the Turks, who have made it at times decidedly uncomfortable for passers between the battery and this village, and have sent a multitude of compliments in this direction. General Skobeleff has been meditating for some days the capture of this territory, and it was decided to attempt the advance last evening, in conjunction with a forward movement of General Gourko on the left.

We had been basking in the warm sunshine for a day or two, and had begun to believe that it was the real Indian summer after all, but yesterday morning the sun rose pale and feeble, no warmth penetrated the thick curtain of fog that clung to the earth, and as the day advanced the mist grew more and more dense, until, by the middle of the afternoon, it was impossible to see the distance of a hundred yards. All the forenoon the troops were moving in small detachments toward the place of concentration near the Loftcha road, and everyone knew that an attack was arranged for five o'clock in the afternoon. The fog effectually concealed the hostile lines from one another, and the batteries were silent. To us who were waiting this silence was ominous, for it was broken by the muffled tramp of men and words of command as the detachments went away into the fog. At three o'clock the ragged red and yellow flag was taken from its place by the side of the door of the low mud hovel occupied by General Skobeleff, and the staff assembled to inspect the troops and to accompany the General, who was to conduct the attack in person. It was a most picturesque and romantic cavalcade that filed out of the yard and followed the young leader out to certain danger and possible death. General Skobeleff, alike heedless of cold and damp and whizzing missiles, was the only one who was not bundled up in overcoat and capuchon. He led the way through the narrow alleys of the village, mounted on a white horse—the soldiers look for the white horse as much as for their beloved commander—confident, cheerful, inspiring to look upon. Behind him a motley retinue; Circassians with long surtouts and silver-mounted harness and weapons; blonde youths already scarred and covered with decorations, correspondents in civil dress, Cossacks half hidden in their grey-coats and hoods, and in the middle of the group a picturesque Circassian on a white horse, bearing the tattered banner, quite like an old crusader, with his quaint arms and curious dress. The flag, too, is quite mediæval in appearance, and completed the illusion to perfection. It is a square silk banner, fastened to a Cossack's lance, and has on the one side the white cross of St. George,

The Turkish loss, of course, was much heavier, as the Russians were under cover almost immediately on getting possession of the hill, and lost less than a hundred in the assault itself. The weather is fine again to day.

BUCHAREST, *November 11th, Night* — A Russian success is reported here to day — the occupation of Vratza by General Gouliko. This victory is evidently of some importance. Vratza or Vraca as spelt on the Austrian map is situated some fifty kilometres west of Plevna and although only occupied by 1500 Turks mostly irregulars, still formed a considerable depot of ammunition and provisions which I hear, are now safely in the hands of the Russians. The loss on the Russian side is reported small.

+ HEADQUARTERS OF GENERAL SKOBELEFF BRESTOVFC, *November 10th* — This village has been in Russian hands only three or four days and even now is in the ragged edge of the Turkish infantry fire from the rifle pits in front of the Krishine redoubt which crowns the summit of the smooth hill to the north. Stray shells make the empty houses re-echo with a musical prolongation of the noise of the whizzing bits, and the singing of the Perbody Martini bullets is heard at short intervals day and night through. The village is not an agreeable place of residence for it occupies a little valley only a few hundred yards from the Turkish works and the dip seems to be just at the right angle to pick up all the odd bits of lead and iron that come anywhere in this direction. The casualties are perhaps more numerous here than in the trenches on account of the peculiar conformation of the ground but, then to be any here in the neighbourhood of General Skobeleff is always to be in dangerous quarters. The trenches run along the northern edge of the village behind the garden hedges, and out across the open slope to the left, into a battery on the hill directly opposite the Krishine redoubt. The former position was back on the Loftcha road but a young officer of the 16th Division saw a good opportunity of flanking the Turks who held this point three or four days ago, and with a hundred men drove them out of the place, and occupied their lines himself. This village, by the way, is just where the village of Krishine is marked on the Austrian map a half mile north west of the hill where the Loftcha road descends into the valley towards Plevna. This new position of General Skobeleff not only brings him nearer to the Turks, but shortens the line of investment materially. There is a certain green hill to the north of the line, thinly wooded and not over five hundred paces from the battery on the Loftcha road,

The perfect confidence of the soldiers, inspired by the presence of the man whom they regard as a protector, infallible leader, and beloved friend at the same time, made the success of the undertaking assured, and as they went down over the hill to the trenches, to await the opening salvo of artillery, we took our place—a little knot of non-combatants—in the trenches on the hill alongside the battery which was to give the signal for the assault. The hot breath of sixteen field pieces scorched our faces as the opening salvo shook the heavy air, then came a cheer on the right, just down in the hollow, and the singing of bullets filled the air over our heads. We were seated in the trench of the picquet line, and when the bullets began to chip off the twigs on the top of the breastwork, and plump into the earth at our feet, we began to look about us to see what we were depending on for support. Only a thin line of men were lying against the dirt, rifle in hand, anxiously trying to see some object in front to shoot at. An officer came along and extinguished all the fires, and kept cautioning and encouraging the men, ordering them to stop firing and to watch. The musketry rattled and roared in the hollow and off on the green hill on the right, and sounded like the surging of a storm. The battery alongside kept banging away, deafening us, and blinding us with the flash. In the dense fog every noise was magnified, and as the shells screamed past us and exploded with a sharp, ringing sound behind us in the village, it seemed as if they were ten times the ordinary size. The darkness was impenetrable. An officer or a couple of stretcher-bearers loomed up occasionally through the fog, and dodged and jumped into the ditch as the leaden shower came over us. Down below in the hollow we could see no flash, only from that darkness came a hot spitting of lead that made it almost certain death to face. The fog began to condense and gather on the ground, and the cold increased, and still the battle roared, and rose and fell, ceased and began again. At last it was evident from the firing that the position was taken, and we retired to the village to the music of the shells and bullets, and up to our little camp as quickly as possible, for we were anxious for men and horses. We found all safe, but tent and waggon riddled with bullets, and only one soldier's horse limping with a wound. We put the waggon in such shelter as we could easily find behind a straw stack, and awaited the next burst of battle, which we knew was sure to come. At a quarter-past ten it broke again, and the same fiendish noise and rattle went on as before, and the bullets and shells kept singing about our ears for a long half-hour, and all was silent, with an occasional cannon report, until day-

and on the other the letters M C (Michael Skobelev), and the date 1875 in
 was carried through
 in all the hard fighting
 famous. We went on, losing our way a dozen times, and at last reached the spot where the troops were massed near an encampment of straw huts, all drawn up in order with arms in hands and with spades to intrench the ground they were about to take, stretcher-bearers in a group at the rear, a suggestive but unpleasant sight, a battery of mitrailleuses bundled up like so many human beings to keep out the damp, and in front of the troops, the little body of picked men, each with his shovel his rations, and plenty of ammunition, who were to make the first rush across use the bayonet, and then throw it aside for the spade and endeavour to cover in time to resist the attack of the returning Turks.

It was a dramatic and intensely impressive scene, these square masses of earnest men every one with his eyes fixed on the face of the General, who passed before them all with the customary greeting which was answered with a will like one voice from the battalion in turn. Against the background of grey mists which had now settled down so thick that objects were not visible the length of a company front came out the forms of men and horses in exaggerated relief, and made wonderfully picturesque the groups and masses of expectant soldiers. General Skobelev dismounted and told the men just what he expected of them—that they were not to storm the works of Plevna but only to run forward and take the piece of ground they knew perfectly well in front of the road, and to hold it until they had works thrown up. He cautioned them as many were young soldiers sent out from the reserves to fill the great gaps in the ranks not to advance too far, but to mind exactly what the officers told them. He would be with them himself, and would direct the movements personally. Surely a finer lot of men never went into a fight, young, healthy, devoted, and confident, every face wore an expression that was a proof of courage and earnestness and even religious zeal. As we stood there the darkness rapidly increased, and it was nearly five o'clock as the troops moved forward at quick pace in front of the General and staff. As the men passed they all received encouraging words, and they went by smiling at the good-natured chaff from the General, who called to them by name remarked on their new boots, which he said were like those of a Spanish don, and told the musicians they would play a waltz in the new redoubts on the morrow.

+ HEADQUARTERS, DOLNY DUBNIK, *November 16th.*—The position here remains unchanged. Since the seizure of the Green Hill by Skobelev, already described in a previous telegram, no important movement has been undertaken by the Russians. The Turks have made three attacks upon Skobelev's position on three successive nights, but were each time repulsed with heavy loss. The defence of this new position is most successful and brilliant, and the position itself is of more importance than I was at first disposed to acknowledge. Skobelev remains night after night in the trenches, and has succeeded in pushing his lines up to within one hundred yards of the Turks. They are indeed so close to each other that scarcely a night passes without heavy firing. Fire is opened all along the line upon the slightest alarm. At the same time that Skobelev advanced, the Guards pushed forward to a position directly under the Krishine redoubt, where the outposts now are, and the line extends back over the hills to near the bridge over the Vid. The village of Krishine remains neutral ground. Two days later the Roumanians and Guards advanced to within rifle-shot of the bridge.

The circle of investment is now drawn as close as can be without actually besieging the Turkish positions. Nevertheless, in only two places, at the Grivica redoubt and on Skobelev's position, are they within speaking distance of each other. There has been very little artillery fire during the last two days, and Todleben seems to have abandoned his plan of concentrated volley firing upon specified points, and only puts it in practice once in forty-eight hours. Deserters coming in from the front of Plevna report that the soldiers receive three-quarters of a pound of bread daily, and a small piece of meat twice a week. They complain bitterly of the privations to which they are subjected.

At the same time that a million and a half of Turkish rations were captured at Vraca the families of several Bashi-Bazouks and seamen were taken. They passed through here yesterday, escorted by Lancers and Guards, on their way to Plevna, whither they are sent as a retaliatory measure for the Bulgarians who are driven from Plevna. They were looking very miserable, but were transported in ox-waggon filled with straw. They were treated here with the greatest kindness by the officers, who took them to their quarters, and gave them food and even money, in spite of the fact that one of the women shot a Russian sergeant in the streets of Vraca some time after the occupation. It seems like a severe measure as regards the women and children, but in all such cases the measure depends for its justification on its

break when we were awakened by a new peal of artillery, and had the same continuous rattle of bullets among the twigs. Then we learned the details of the occupation of the ridge which have reached the public long before this by telegraph. As I write the popping of rifles is heard on the ridge for the Turks do not seem satisfied with the loss of the position and make frequent but ineffectual attempts to regain it. A visit to the ground gained showed me what they had done in the few hours of darkness. An irregular zigzag trench runs across the hill to the further side toward the Incirli ravine, where there is a square battery for the Gatling guns. Along the trenches and among the trees there is no sign of the struggle. The sights of a battle field are only horrible after the affair is over and it was a relief to find no dead man no wounded man no marks of a scuffle or a bayonet fight even on the ground where the struggle had taken place. Now we are waiting the final result and occupy our time in skirmishing about between the shelter and the fire for tea and food and spend the moments of lull in the shower of bullets in arranging for the next burst of the lead mine. The penetration of the Peabody Martini bullet is simply remarkable. At the distance of two thousand yards from the Turkish lines I have dug them out of a foot of solid earth of a threshing floor. At the distance we are now from those who hold the rifles nothing short of a thick earthwork will stop them for they skip merrily through the roofs of the houses and through the mud fences and bury themselves deep in the earth. During the fight which was just taken place I have heard for the first time the new falconets at work. In a telegram I spoke of the use of these demi cannon as I called them for want of a better word. They are simply short rifles of about 80 lbore breech loading and carrying a ball heavy enough to penetrate an ordinary breastwork and kill the man behind it at 250 yards. The report sounds more like the bursting of a small shell in the lines than like a gun for it is just between the rifle and cannon report in volume. A telescopic rifle with a good marksman to use it would do more damage to the Turks than a thousand of the falconets and put a stop to

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THE GENERAL himself is asleep on a stretcher in the trenches and will not come up again until the occupation of the ridge is a settled fact and there is no more danger of the Turks retaking it. It is no wonder that the soldiers of such a general fight well.

Yesterday the Turkish newspapers stated that he had had a fit of apoplexy. I have reason to know, however, that he is well, and that if he has had any fit it must have been of a mild character. There is evidence, however, of dissension among the Pachas which may lead in a few days to important events. Hitherto Mahmoud Damat's influence at the palace has been sufficiently great to keep his enemies in check, but his deserved unpopularity is, I think, at last likely to bring about his downfall. He is unpopular alike with the Pachas and the people, and would no doubt have been got rid of long since but for the personal influence of the Sultan. The favour of the Sovereign, however, has, I believe, now been withdrawn, and Mahmoud may be considered in disgrace.

The outcry against Mahmoud is only one of the phases of the movement of which I have spoken. The party of Murad has been stirring, and on Friday and Saturday last the Government took the precaution of surrounding the Palace of Cheragan, where the late Sultan is confined, with soldiers. This movement is attributed to the Young Turkey party, though it is difficult to see what they would be at. There is no doubt a party, but I believe a very small one, in favour of Republicanism, of the meaning of which, except that it is government without a Sultan, they probably know nothing, and it may be well that some of the Pachas who are out may have been willing to use some of the hot-brained fanatics to get rid of the Sultan and the Pachas who are in, and take their places. It would be absurd to suppose that there was any patriotism in wishing to return to Murad. The present Sultan has done nothing which ought to make the Turks discontented with him, while Murad still continues in weak health. Another explanation attributes the movement in favour of Murad entirely to Mahmoud Damat, the theory being that it is of his creation, in order to gain the credit of himself bringing it to the notice of the Sovereign, and of showing him that he, Mahmoud, is still the only man who can render his seat on the throne secure.

It is fair to regard these signs of dissatisfaction and dissension as the result of the Turkish defeats in Asia Minor and about Plevna. The depression among the Turks of all classes is really very great, and is given expression to on every hand. Notwithstanding that telegrams have been issued by Government concealing the real facts, the truth has none the less become known. Perhaps even the constant repetition of warnings to the newspapers that they will be suspended, the last of which appeared only yesterday, if they publish "false news," that is, news unpleasant to the Turks, or, in the words

success. The *lex talionis* is a hard law. Nevertheless, it may prevent more suffering than it causes if it stops the Turks from driving Bulgarian women and children from their homes.

The weather still continues fine. There has been no rain since the 1st of the month, and if we are to judge by appearances it may still hold fine another month. Nothing new has transpired relating to the amount of supplies Osman has. It is believed he will be able to hold out for another month. The Russian troops are in excellent health, and, indeed, the weather is so fine that the officers who have indoor quarters prefer dining in the open air. There has been no attack to relieve Osman by a force coming from Sofia. There has been no fighting since the fall of Teliche, and the Turks have not shown themselves on this side the Balkans. Bulgarian spies have latterly reported that forces are on the march from Sofia estimated variously from 15,000 to 40,000 men, but these reports have little credit here. As the Russian cavalry is considerably advanced, we should have timely warning of their approach should any attempt be made.

The army of the Czarewitch had little occupation, besides that of making reconnaissances in the latter part of October and the first half of November. In one of these Prince Sergius Leuchtenberg third son of the Grand Duchess Marie, sister of the Czar was killed. He was attached to the staff of the Czarewitch and had participated in several of the battles along the Lom, on every occasion showing himself courageous even to recklessness. He was out with his troops when a ball struck him in the forehead, death being instantaneous.

Before noting the rapid and critical development of the campaign in Asia, we may glance at the effect which the recent successes had produced in the Turkish capital —

CONSTANTINOPLE, November 9th — A movement has been going on in the capital during the last week about which I have found it difficult to get at the truth. Some of the mosques have been placarded with denunciations of Mahmoud Damat the brother in law of the Sultan, attributing to him the misfortunes of the war, and charging him with having sold his country to Russia. All sorts of rumours have been current about him. Two days ago it was asserted that he had been poisoned.

attempt to make peace. Still, in spite of them, the peace party is growing stronger, and is daily increased by the belief, which M. Thiers also entertained, that the longer the war lasts the more exacting will be the terms of peace.

It was announced yesterday that the Porte, in consequence of urgent requests, has consented to allow neutral vessels still remaining in the Sea of Azof to pass through the Black Sea, the Bosphorus, and the Dardanelles, to the Archipelago, on the sole condition of stopping to sell their cargoes in Constantinople, when such cargoes consist of grain. Whether there are any neutral vessels now in the Sea of Azof may, I believe, be reasonably doubted. This much, however, is certain—that several vessels have left Constantinople with the connivance of the Government, have run the blockade, if one may speak of running a blockade where the permission of the blockaders is given; have returned with Russian cargoes to the Bosphorus, and have, of course, not been molested by the authorities. This is in Constantinople a matter of notoriety; the names of the vessels are known to everybody who cares to make inquiries, and the motives of the special permission given to their charterers are freely spoken of. The fact possesses this importance—that permission being granted to vessels under the Greek flag, a similar permission ought to be granted to English and other foreign vessels. Indeed, if any English vessel should be caught in attempting to run the blockade, the fact of permission having been granted to certain vessels raises the entire question of the existence of the blockade.

The two Geshoffs have now been in prison at Philippopolis over seventy days. Up to the present hour they have neither been interrogated nor subjected to any form of trial. No charge whatever has been communicated to them or to anybody else, except, possibly, Mr. Layard. It seems now that their detention has been further increased by a difference between the civil and military governors. Ibrahim Pacha, the military governor, has, however, now been removed; and a telegram has, it is stated, been sent by the Grand Vizier to bring the prisoners to Constantinople. After this they are to be exiled; why or wherefore, except that they are wealthy and influential Bulgarians who have not bribed sufficiently high, nobody can tell.

After his rapid flight from the battle-field of Aladja Dag and from Kars, described by a correspondent in the preceding chapter, Mukhtar Pacha effected a junction with the forces of Kurd

of the communication "of a nature to trouble men's minds," makes the public believe the news to be worse than it actually is. Twice a week we receive our English papers, and a larger section of the receiving community the newspapers of Athens. It is unnecessary to say that the latter represent nothing in a favourable light for the Turks, and yet it is from them rather than from the Turkish papers under a strict censorship that the general impression of the progress of the war is derived. Not only is the war going against the Turks, not only do they see a large amount of destitution, misery, and poverty in the capital and in the provinces, but most of them have come to understand that in spite of the bravery of their soldiers Turkey can gain nothing by the war which she has undertaken. I have spoken in previous letters of the enormous drain upon the Turkish population which the war has made, and I mentioned a fortnight ago that the last reserves have been called out. These men have been arriving during the last week, and yesterday I saw some hundreds of the latest arrivals drawn up in line to be marched up to the Seraskierate or War Department to obtain their uniforms and to be drilled. It was a sad sight. There could hardly have been a man among them under forty years of age, probably hardly a man who was not the father of a family or the supporter of one. But while such a sight to a European was sad, the effect could not be otherwise than depressing to a Turk. He knows that the chances against his winning have always been great, and are perhaps now greater than ever. But the more thoughtful among them know a fact which makes them more despondent still, that every month of war, whether they win or lose, is weighting them the more heavily in their struggle with the Christian races of the empire. For Europe the Eastern Question may mean a struggle simply between Russia and Turkey. The Turks know well that when the present war is over the silent, inevitable struggle which has been going on during the last thirty years for wealth, education, and supremacy must be resumed, and resumed with largely diminished numbers on the side of the Turks. In short, in this war the Turks have everything to lose and nothing to win, the greatest success that they can hope for being to lessen the terms which Russia will exact. The result of this knowledge is to increase the party in favour of peace, at the head of which is the Sultan himself. In a country where one set of Pachas is perpetually intriguing against another, and a here defeat by the opposing party usually means banishment there will always be a party which will encourage the outcry for prolonging the war, if the Pachas who are in

valley, giving access to the pass, consisted of two conical hills, one dominating the other; behind them obliquely were two other mamelons occupied militarily. The right was commanded by Ismail Pacha, Vali of Erzeroum, and for some time past commanding the army corps of the right at Bayazid. The left of the position of Deve-Boyun consisted of a rounded hill, a spur thrown off by the higher mountains on that side. It was crowned by a redoubt, and lines of trenches stretched further west along the slopes of the adjoining hills. Thus the position, slightly concave towards the front, commanded all access to the pass. Its entire length was some three hours' march. To defend it we had an army of about 15,000 men. This consisted of 2,800 men, the remnant of the Army of Kars, which accompanied Mukhtar Pacha in his flight from that town; of 1,500 picked up at Kuprikoi; of 4,500 from Ismail Pacha's army, retiring from Bayazid; of stragglers who came up; of troops from the garrison, and of four battalions arrived from Trebizond. Faizi Pacha, an old Hungarian officer, chief of the staff, worked hard at the defences.

It was believed that the Russians would never dare attack in front the tremendous heights which fronted them. Our only care was the guarding of the valleys by which our flank could be turned. The Russians, with a rare ability, seem to have calculated on the general situation, the demoralized condition of the army, and the want of artillery which must necessarily have followed the capture of the forty-two guns at the battle of Aladjä, took the bull by the horns, and stormed the position. The French courier coming from Persia had passed through the Russian lines on the previous evening, and had brought word that all the Russian generals were present, and with them the French military attaché, General de Courcey. This led us to imagine that something serious was pending, but, all the same we never dreamt of the audacious *coup* in store for us. Bashi-Bazouks and Arabs from Orfa and Aleppo flaunted their tawdry rags in the muddy streets of Erzeroum, and universal confidence reigned throughout the town. At last the day of combat arrived. On Sunday, November 4th, the Russians launched their entire force against Deve-Boyun. This consisted of forty-eight battalions. (I give the statement of Mukhtar Pacha, commanding-in-chief the Turkish army.) Between eight and nine in the morning the long dark Russian lines were seen opening out in the wide dim plain that stretches away to Hassan Kalch. The Russians are so given to an almost perpetual military movement that not much attention was attracted by the long lines

Ismail Pacha, commanding the right wing of his army at Kuprikoi. Although this place had been fortified with a view to such danger as that which had now emerged, it was not deemed prudent to stay there, and the retreat of the united forces was continued through Hassan Kaleh to the Deve Boyun heights covering Erzeroum, at a distance of six miles east of the city. There, thanks to the foresight of Mukhtar Pacha's Chief of the Staff, Faiz Pacha (a Hungarian named Kohlman), a strong position had been prepared, and there the army rested until the 4th of November, when General Heimann, who had been joined by General Tergukhassoff, carried the position by assault after nine hours' fighting. The Turks lost forty two guns, including guns of position and the whole of their field artillery.

The following letter describes the storming of the formidable Deve Boyun position east of Erzeroum by the Russians under General Heimann —

- ERZEROUm, November 5th — When I closed my last letter by saying that I thought the position of Deve Boyun impregnable when attacked in front, and that in all likelihood the enemy would in preference try a turning movement, I little calculated on Russian *elan* and the dogged obstinacy of their attack. Yesterday they attacked us frankly in front and took all our positions, after a hard day's fighting. The third and last barrier has been passed and at the moment I write the Russian siege guns are being pointed on the town. We have been summoned to surrender and Mukhtar Pacha's reply, as I telegraph to night, is that he will defend the town while a single man remains.

The Russians following up the disastrous retreat from Kars, had camped in the plain of Hassan Kaleh, at the village of Khoredjuka, about an hour and a quarter from the Turkish positions at Deve Boyun. At this last mentioned point the mountains girding the Hassan Kaleh plain on the north and south close in, forming a narrow pass leading to id. From its peculiar form, and it has been named the "Camel's hump." The pass is guarded by three military positions, which on the occasion of the battle constituted our centre, right, and left. The centre is a long hill crowned by a narrow plateau strongly intrenched, and was defended by sixteen field guns. The right, at the other side of a shallow

hard plied, and of eighteen guns at our centre fourteen were dismounted or useless. Then a sudden inspiration seemed to seize the Russian General. His rallied battalions were hurled against the long hill which formed our left centre. Arrived at its base, a steep slope screens the assaulting columns from the fire of the defenders. Russian reserves are pouring steadily forward. The artillery of the attack continues its deadly fire. The Turks on the long hill waver—they fly. The Russians are already on the plateau. Mukhtar Pacha, with several battalions, dashes at once to the critical point. Too late! The officers of the battalions fall dead, and flight ensues. The centre is carried. “I remained there,” said the Marshal to me afterwards; “I wished to die.” But people came round him, and he was carried away. Then came a hurried retreat on Erzeroum. The darkness only saved the army from annihilation or capture. We lost forty-two field-guns and pieces of position, and about 4,500 men killed, wounded, and prisoners. The Marshal himself admits 1,000 killed. We are for the moment blocked in Erzeroum. To the Russian summons to surrender, the Marshal, after demanding twenty-four hours’ grace, replied that while a stone of the fortress remained erect he would hold Erzeroum. We have 12,000 troops in garrison, much provisions, and plenty of ammunition. It is from the plain west of the town that we fear assault. I write these lines hurriedly, just before the departure of an unexpected Consular courier, as welcome as unforeseen. The Cossacks already rove over the Erzeroum plain, and it may be this will be my last letter from the Turkish lines. Whether the Russians will let me write remains to be seen.

November 10th.—Yesterday at three o’clock A.M., the Russians surprised Azizieh Fort, which was retaken by the Turks after severe fighting, continuing all day.

The Russians are advancing along the mountains south of the plain to interrupt our communications with Trebizond. Heavy cannonading from forts and rampart continues. Orders from Constantinople forbid newspaper telegrams. To-morrow the town will probably be completely invested. The losses on both sides are exceedingly heavy. The population undoubtedly wishes to surrender.

On the night of the 9th of November, two battalions of the Elizabethpol Regiment surprised Mount Azizieh, which overlooks Erzeroum on the east, and which was defended by three great redans. They took 500 men and 20 officers prisoners, spiked

of infantry in the plain. I had seen the same thing so often from the heights of Aladja that I turned away my field-glass, convinced that it was only a Sunday parade. Later on I found out my mistake. Gradually the long black parallel lines crept closer, so quietly that if one were not observing attentively, the shortening of the distance might pass for an optical illusion. But the Turkish gunners had more accustomed eyes, and the long white curdled smoke-cloud that breaks from the central battery announces that the fight has begun. Gun after gun puffs out without any apparent impression on the menacing lines. In fact, they are at long range, and at best Turkish artillery fire is far from excellent. Not so the enemy's artillery fire. Shell after shell is planted in our midst with a precision which recalls the battle of Aladja. "I don't believe," said one old Moslem officer at my side, "that Russian officers direct those guns, they are English or they are Prussian." I had seen the changed character of the artillery fire when the Russians drove us from before Kars backwards on the Soghanlı Daglı. The Marshal himself, Mukhtar Pacha, called my attention to this extreme accuracy of fire, as he had done on a former occasion when the Russians stormed Evhatepassı Hill. An attack on the centre seems evident, but yet the Turks make no movement. Every one is at his post, and an ominous silence broods along the line, save when from the right the heavy guns thunder out at intervals. Suddenly the Russians open right and left, directing their dividing forces outside our extreme flanks, on one side towards the glens leading to the valley of Oltı, on the other to the flank of the mountains south of Erzeroum. A stubborn resistance follows, for the Turks have had time to march battalions to the threatened points. All day long the dull roar of musketry reached us from the lateral valleys. On the left, Mehemet Ali Pacha, the bravest soldier in the Army of Anatolia, holds his ground. At the centre, Moussa Pacha, a Circassian chief, commands, on the right, two Pachas have already fallen, Rufat Pacha and Hakif Pacha. Hussein Pacha, the old artillery commander, takes their place, and the fight goes on. It is evident the Russians are getting the worst of it, for their fire begins to recoil along the dun hill slopes on both right and left flank. I believed it was a Turkish victory, and that we were sure of at least a month's fighting before Erzeroum could be even menaced.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon when we saw the enemy on both flanks retiring, to rally out of cannon shot of our positions. During the side attacks the Russian artillery was

on advancing after the storming of the hill towards Vezinkoi, was stunned by a rifle bullet, which grazed the top of his forehead, without wounding him. He fell senseless from his horse, but recovered half an hour afterwards, and then continued his duties incommoded only by a slight headache. A few minutes later, while in conversation with General Heimann and the young Prince Mirsky, a Turkish shell burst right between the party, covering them all over with earth, which filled their overcoat pockets; but not one of the three was even scratched by the fragments of the projectile.

On the 22nd I was gratified at last by obtaining the much-desired bullock-cart, on which the bulk of my household goods were placed. This two-wheeled vehicle has a close resemblance to those used by the Aryans in their migrations towards the West thousands of years ago. The axle-tree, turning round with the block-wheels, supports two long beams, joining at the fore part at a sharp angle with the thole for the bullocks by means of a wooden bolt. The bottom of this triangular construction is formed by three cross-beams and some hurdle-work. This primitive machine ploughs through the muddy country at the rate of two miles an hour. For all that I was as glad to hire it as though I had obtained a Pullman saloon. The journey was far from being a pleasant one. We reached at first Subatan, still distinguished by its solitary poplar tree, the branches of which have been badly dealt with by the bullets. At nightfall we reached Hadji Veli Koi. Both villages have witnessed a series of sanguinary engagements, and their lanes have been reddened with human blood. Now they lay in ruins deserted by the inhabitants. Only three or four of the larger semi-subterranean houses have been spared for the benefit of the military authorities, who make use of them as post stations, hospitals, or depôts. All the remaining huts have been destroyed by pulling down the timber supporting their flat roofs, which is indiscriminately used as fuel by the soldiers encamped here. The Turkish peasants have thus literally lost everything which they could not manage to take away in their carts. Only the rough cyclopean black walls and the excavations give evidence that people lived here a fortnight ago in comparative security, under the protection of their own soldiery. We found piteous accommodation there for the night in one of their hospital tents which had just been pitched, and underneath which the cold wind blew in. On the following day we passed slowly over the late battle-field, having on our right the Awli-Yer Hill, and on our left the hill from the summit of which Mukhtar Pacha had witnessed the discomfiture of his

20 guns, and then retired, as Fort Medjidieh, commanding Azizieh, rendered the position untenable. The Russian loss was about 400. The attack was intended to have a far more important character, but according to General Heumann's official report several columns of the attacking force lost their way in the darkness, and thus the principal operation fell through.

On the night of the 12th of November another attack was made, but without success, and the Russian commander then determined to wait for reinforcements, in the meantime sending his cavalry out to cut off the communications of the city.

General Melikoff, who had convinced himself that the fortress of Kars might be captured by a skilful use of the means at his disposal, had remained before that city, removing his headquarters to Veran Kaleh and kept up a lively cannonade against that place. On the 28th of October the correspondent with the Russians there wrote—

△ CAMP BOYUK TEKME, BEFORE KARS *October 28th*—Since the headquarters were removed from the Karajal Hills subsequently to the battle on the 15th, fifty miles off and nine miles to the south west of Kars, I have not had the opportunity of telegraphing or writing. We have no telegraph office yet at our disposal, and several days may still elapse before one is likely to be established anywhere near. My own transfer to this place was connected with much trouble. As I was unable to load my big tent and sundry luggage on a single pack horse, I was obliged to apply for a bullock cart. It was not an easy thing to obtain one, though it was understood that I should pay for it as liberally as possible. Only after urgent entreaty the governor of the conquered country, a good natured old general, condescended to allow me the accommodation. Before obtaining it we lived at the Karajal camp as though we were out of the world. Officers passing occasionally knew either nothing about what was going on at the front, or narrated impossible events the coinage of their own fancy.

The removal of the Turkish prisoners was the last act performed in the great drama of the 15th instant. Now the curtain is lowered, but on the stage a new play is prepared—the siege of Kars and the attack on Erzeroum. Meanwhile, let me relate an episode of the victory of the 15th. General Gubski, the able and scientific head of the artillery before the Awh Yei,

within the walls of Erzeroum, till Ali Pacha from Batoum, and reinforcements from Constantinople, come up *viâ* Trebizond.

As to my further journey to headquarters, I have little of interest to narrate. The succession of dreary hills and tablelands, all uniformly carpeted with withered grass, bore a repulsive aspect, and the carcasses of horses and bullocks were far from giving the landscape a touch of the picturesque. Moreover the whole scenery was veiled in mist, and the temperature was not quite intertropical. We reached Vezinkoi, on the heights of which Generals Heimann and Lavareff had met on the day of the memorable battle with their victorious troops. Here a camp was established belonging to a brigade ordered to invest Kars on this side. The plateau behind, and the rocky conical hill close by, vomited no more iron and lead from their numerous intrenchments, which one by one had been stormed with irresistible pluck on the 15th inst. On examining those formidable positions I could not help thinking that if the Turks had shown their ordinary stubbornness it would have been doubtful whether the Russians, with their comparatively small attacking forces, could have carried the day. As I am well acquainted with the environs of Plevna, I can say that here was a more difficult piece of work to be achieved than on those soft, sloping hills. Stupid pride had ruffled Ghazi Mukhtar, or he would have retired from his useless position on the Aladja, from which winter would have driven him anyhow, and would have kept the plateaux of Vezinkoi only, with a firm hold on Kars. He might still have been the Ghazi, whom he is no longer but in name. In fact, the Turks were demoralized by the belief current among them that they were surrounded by a force of 100,000 men. In magnifying thus their enemy's numbers they fought with a faint heart, and ran much quicker than they ought. Their wounded and dead cannot be therefore so very numerous as was at first supposed, and some of the gallant cavalry charges mentioned in the official report, especially those on the troops retreating from the Little Yagni, did not at all bear the epic character attributed to them. As to the number of prisoners, either at first gross exaggeration was indulged in by the staff officers, or most of the captured Turks ran away again, hidden by the darkness. Now it is avowed that only seven thousand were taken alive. Vezinkoi had some thirty Greek families among its population. These descendants of Xenophon's deserted or captured soldiers, perhaps, were driven away by their Turkish fellow-citizens some months ago, and their houses destroyed.

army Here and there we met with the carcasses of dead horses, or a still unburied corpse All these places, which some days ago re echoed with the roar of battle, were calm enough now Only endless strings of bullock carts and horse waggons, conveying the Russian camp implements, moved towards Vezinkoi Three heavy 24 pounders were equally on their way to Kars, each of them was dragged along over the steep track by a team of twenty two buffaloes, while numerous vehicles conveyed their ammunition and paraphernalia These formidable engines of war throw their projectiles a distance of six miles They will be brought to bear against Kars in the hope that the inhabitants will finally impress upon the military authorities the necessity of surrendering that fortress I don't suppose that the fanatics inside care much about their hovels being knocked over As I have heard since, they have not the slightest doubt of Ismail Pacha joining Mukhtar with 30,000 men somewhere, and of their coming quickly to the rescue of the beleaguered city They may be grossly mistaken in their calculations Independently of the fact that Mukhtar's troops are demoralized and very weak in numbers, Ismail too is not in a position to make a bold resistance When he heard the news of the battle on the 15th he took, on the 20th inst, to flight, pursued by sixteen battalions under General Tergukasoff's command In his disorderly haste he has in the first place left about 4,500 of his sick and wounded behind, entrusting them to the generosity of his adversary, perhaps with the cunning view of hampering him In the second place hundreds of his soldiers desert daily, and others throw away their arms, ammunition, and knapsacks, with which the road to Erzeroum is strewn These facts do not speak much for the efficiency of his forces, should he even be lucky enough to reach Mukhtar or Erzeroum before the Russians In case, however the two parties meet, the Russian army, with their hosts, will most probably surprise, and then, as they have no heavy guns at their command, their situation may become awkward when the cold weather sets in, which we expect from day to day While writing, I am informed that Generals Heimann and Tergukasoff effected their junction yesterday at Kuprikoi, only about twenty five miles distant from Erzeroum, and are now pursuing Mukhtar and Ismail Pacha The Turkish generals are not now capable of resisting the Russians an instant in the open field, but the danger is that they may find shelter, food, provisions, arms, ammunition, and new courage

an irregular Armenian rider, and adopted a quicker pace for our horses. We passed another Russian camp and depôt, and a little later the ruins of an Armenian village, which had been utterly destroyed by the Turks. Whether its population had been murdered or not we could not ascertain, as nobody living was visible on that dismal spot. We rode on, up and down, for miles. Ascending a slope in a straight line, in order to avoid the circuitous carriage road, my horse jumped suddenly over a muddy, suspicious-looking rivulet, instead of walking through it, as I expected him to do. Being thus taken by surprise, I was thrown off the saddle on my back. On recovering my senses I found my head comfortably lodged on the soft turf just between two fragments of rock, each of which was only a few inches from my temples. I was neither hurt, nor stunned, nor bruised, and therefore, knotting the broken bridle together, I followed my companions, who had believed me dead. The six miles were gradually lengthened to no less than twenty-five, and only late in the evening did we arrive at the headquarters, established on the Kars River around the village of Boyuk Tekme. The carts, of course, could not follow us up such a distance, and the consequence was that I was compelled to pass another luckless night on the floor of a suttler's tent, covered with my rough felt capot. On the following day the carts arrived, and I was thus enabled to set myself up again.

The camp here is now complete, with the exception of the most essential thing for a newspaper correspondent, the European telegraph. Every day they say that to-morrow the line is sure to be established, but when the to-morrow has become to-day no signs of activity in that direction can be made out. I believe that this untoward delay is caused by the want of the necessary poles, which must be fetched from the wooded mountains between Tiflis and Alexandropol. Time is of no value in Russia. The grand-ducal camp here stretches on both sides of the Kars Tchai, a river which is on the average thirty yards wide and one in depth. Here the watering of the animals and the supply for the men is easy enough, but the drawback is likely to be fever and diarrhœa on account of the pools of stagnant water which here and there are spread over the valley, and have all the appearance of breeding foul and unhealthy miasma. It is true that the heat is over now, and the pestilential exhalations are less to be feared; nevertheless, the sun has a good deal of power occasionally. Despite of all that has been said about the rigour of an Armenian winter, I find the climate here much milder and

We rested here but a few hours, waiting for the carts, and then moved on again over the hills and table lands bordering the plains of Kars, some 1 000 feet below. That fortress, looming at the foot of the opposite range of mountains, was rendered conspicuous by the sunlight which had managed to pierce the heavy clouds. The town has a semi amphitheatrical site between two spurs, on the slopes of which the cubiform black houses are clustered. The difficulty of attacking it in a regular way consists chiefly in the rocky ground before the forts, which does not permit sapping, unless with sandbags. About nightfall we reached, three miles to the west of Vezinkoi, the small Turkish village of Teknely, where we sought and found hospitality under the roof of the head man. The spacious dwelling room, vaulted with heavy timber, was separated from the stables by a railing only and its higher floor. A cheerful fire blazing in the chimney had an alluring aspect, and promised us a comfortable rest after our tiresome journey in the dull, drizzling atmosphere. We—that is to say, a consul, a volunteer captain, a rich proprietor and marshal of the nobility and ourselves on having met our fortune. I stretched my obliging Turkish landlord had spread over the floor. But lo! a frightful deception was in store for us. The fear of having one's throat cut. On entering the deep well inside of vermin began crawling comfort disappeared as by enchantment and gave place to that of utter disappointment. Then a Turkish woman, decently veiled with an old towel rushed in bewildered crying for assistance. On inquiry it soon turned out that a stack of straw belonging to her absent husband had been partly pilfered by passing teamsters and Armenian irregulars, for the benefit of their hungry horses. We settled the dispute as well as we could, and it was agreed that the unwelcome customers should be liable to pay the price of the straw, in conformity with the regulations of the Grand Duke on that head. On the whole, the damage done before our interference was not so important as the excited lady endeavoured to make us believe. We returned to our hothead of parasitical insects, where Cossacks, Armenians, and Turks had already gone to rest, and slept the sleep of the just, despite the countless legions of vermin. With us sleep was out of the question. We were indeed glad to leave at dawn of day this intolerable cavern of torture. The people there had assured us that the headquarters were only six miles beyond Teknely. So we entrusted our luggage to the care of

escorted to headquarters, in order to undergo a close examination as to their identity and their movements. On questioning them, their invariable answer is that they know nothing whatever about anything; but gradually, either frightened by threats of being shot as spies, or inveigled by offers of money and sundry presents, they begin to talk. At first they are timid and incoherent, but soon, giving course to their fancy, they state things beyond the limits of all probability. We made thus, shortly after the battle, a doubtful acquisition. A young man, calling himself Osman Bey, has deserted the Prophet's colours, and has declared his readiness to become again a Christian. The Russians are enchanted at having made so distinguished a convert. The young man, however, is simply the son of an English doctor in Pera. An artillery fire is kept up night and day by a battery of long-range 24-pounders established near the village of Matzera, in the neighbourhood of the Little Yagni. Hitherto nothing is known with regard to the effects of this bombardment, which, however, will assume more formidable proportions after the arrival of the siege train from Alexandropol. We only know that the inhabitants, as well as the garrison of Kars, are disposed to capitulate, if things should go adverse for the Turkish arms at Erzeroum.

One of the most important consequences of the victory of Aladja Dagħ will certainly be the reaction which it is sure to produce in the eastern parts of the Caucasian mountains, where about two months ago a fraction of the population took to arms, and rose against the Russian Government, allured by childish promises which the Stamboul rulers held out to them through the instrumentality of the son of the famous Sheikh Schamyl. Emissaries and letters had been sent to the Kabardians, Lesghians, and Daghestanians, stating, with a power of imagination worthy of the Thousand and One Nights, that in the first place half a million of victorious Ottoman soldiers were on the eve of invading Russia, and of marching to their assistance, and in the second that some fifty camels, loaded with gold, were ready to cross the frontier with the view of enriching every one of the valiant mountaineers. This appeal to the greed of the people was indeed opportune, for without it we may fairly doubt whether their chivalrous propensities and religious zeal would have been raised to the boiling point. What had they to complain of? They pay no taxes, are permitted to bear arms, and nobody ever thought of interfering with their religion. They may erect mosques, study the Koran in their own schools, perform their religious duties, and marry as

more genial than that of Bulgaria notwithstanding our 5500 feet of altitude

The commander of Kars has as usual been summoned to surrender. The Council of War which was thereupon held returned a negative answer. Before the garrison rejected the Russian proposal a Turkish colonel of artillery a certain Hussein Bey who had been trained for eight years at Woolwich visited with his aide de camp our headquarters and was politely received. His object however was not to sign a capitulation but only to obtain as much information as possible about our strength and doings. The blockade of Kars is a very effective one. Some Turks tried to get through our lines but the endeavour was frustrated by vigilant Cossacks. The day before yesterday two English doctors too one of whom had just recovered from typhoid fever were escorted to our camp. On the eve of being shut up for perhaps many months in Kars they thought it practicable to proceed under a flag of truce to Erzeroum where they had left their depot baggage and two of their colleagues. The Russian outposts of course stopped them and conducted them to our headquarters. Here they presented their passports and expressed the desire to return home. In compliance with this reasonable request they were guarded and then conveyed to Tiflis at the expense of the Russian Government. They were very civilly treated here by the officers. Some however gave vent to a certain bitterness of feeling complaining of the English public having sent scores of Red Cross expeditions to the murderous Turks but none to Russia. I explained that the barbarous and miserably provided Turks were more in need of medical attendance than the well organized and civilized Russians. The fact is that every Cossack here is better clad fed paid and attended to than any Turkish captain.

Our three long rifled 24 pounders bombard slowly the city of Kars at a very respectable distance which renders an answer impossible.

Very bad weather has set in just now. The cold rain is furiously beating against my tent but notwithstanding I hear the heavy boom of our guns cannonading Kars.

On the 4th of November the same correspondent wrote —

△ CAMP BOYUK TIRME November 4th — The iron band around Kars is so tightly drawn that no living being can go out or in without being challenged and stopped. I very dry Turks and Armenians trying to break the blockade, are arrested and

entered the fort after its defenders and effectually disabled its guns. When the Russian siege batteries were completed, they extended from the Kars Tchai, near Komadsöi, to the foot of the hills near Vezinköi, and brought a concentrated force to bear upon the southern and eastern faces of Kars. The object of General Melikoff was so to harass and dispirit the men as to prepare the way for an assault, and we know now that in this he succeeded, for just before the catastrophe Hussein Pacha telegraphed to Mukhtar Pacha at Erzeroum that his men were so cowed and dispirited that he feared the fortress would fall at the first assault. Orders were issued from the Russian headquarters for attacking Kars on November 13th, but the weather had made the ground slippery, and the operation was postponed, only however for four days, as the following telegram from the correspondent with General Melikoff shows:—

△ VERAN KALEH, *November 18th, 6 p.m.*—I have just returned from Kars with intelligence of one of the greatest and most difficult military feats ever accomplished—viz., the storming of a fortress, not only of very considerable natural strength, but also constructed by skilful European engineers, English and Prussian, after the best modern principles; a fortress armed with more than 300 Krupp and other heavy guns.

Kars is ours. In a single night it fell into the hands of about 15,000 Russians, who with irresistible courage climbed the steep rocks, the ramparts, and walls, and drove an equal number of desperately fighting Turks in a headlong flight over their ditches and parapets, compelling them to die or surrender.

All the nice inferences drawn as to the impossibility of storming even small intrenchments defended by breechloaders have proved to be incorrect. The nine forts of Kars, its citadel, and numerous batteries and redoubts, did not withstand a single night the onslaught of spirited young troops, for so at least were the Moscow Grenadiers and the 40th Division.

Such an important event cannot, of course, be described at once in all its particulars, and especially by a fatigued correspondent, with his fingers as cold and stiff as icicles. The escalade had been originally fixed for the 13th instant, but was postponed owing to the bad weather until last night. In deep secrecy the columns assumed their appointed positions. General Lazereff, with the 40th Division, commanded the

many wives as they think fit for their domestic convenience. The only obligation imposed upon them in exchange for so many immunities and absolute personal freedom is to recruit among themselves in accordance with their warlike instincts a limited number of irregular horsemen as a contingent to the Russian army in case of a war. These volunteers are not called out at their own expense but receive abundant rations and a monthly pay of thirty roubles. Moreover, all legitimate booty which they chance to make—as cattle and stores belonging to the enemy—are either bought of them in hard cash by the Government or they are at liberty to sell them wherever they think best. In truth no people in the world are better off than these Mohammedan Caucasians. In addition to all this they are prevented from carrying on the sanguinary and ruinous feuds with neighbouring tribes which formerly not only led to the destruction of a vast amount of property but sometimes to the extirpation of whole tribes as a consequence of the terrible law of retaliation. They are intelligent and shrewd enough however to understand that after the battle on the 15th of October, the camel loads of gold may be considered to have vanished for ever. No gold no Circassians is a proverb the truth of which Ghazi Mukhtar Pacha was enabled to test when his Caucasian horsemen left him by wholesale desertion in spite of their boundless fanaticism. That the Turkish prisoners made on the 15th ult. were partly escorted by a Lesghian irregular regiment was a stroke of refined policy on the part of the Russian authorities which cannot fail to give ocular evidence of the discomfiture of the host which was so confidently expected to assist in the deliverance of the Caucasians from the yoke of the infidels. As after the failure of an insurrectionary movement discontented populations are disposed to keep the peace for a long time, the troops employed there will soon be available.

For Kars however a critical period was approaching. As soon as General Melikoff found that Hussein Hami Pacha would not surrender, he determined to commence artillery operations against the south east front of the fortress. On the 4th of November his long range guns opened fire from Magarlık. On the 5th, the Russian army marched from Karajal to Vezinkoi. On its way it was attacked by ten Turkish battalions issuing forth from Fort Hafiz Pacha. The Turks were repulsed, and the Russians, following up their advantage,

To-morrow the staff will go to Kars. Tartars and other mounted militiamen are still pillaging unchecked, but order will be restored to-day. Great difficulties are experienced with the numerous Turkish sick and the prisoners.

The following letter from the author of the two preceding telegrams, describes in detail the capture of the various works constituting the fortress of Kars:—

△ KARS, *November 24th*:—Changing headquarters is a disagreeable performance for any one not directly connected with the staff and its luxuries. The chief annoyance to a Correspondent, however, is when the telegraph and post offices are shifted, for a considerable time is almost sure to elapse before they are re-established in working order at their new places. The successful storming of Kars has given rise to a general migration, and hence the delay which has taken place in forwarding a full description of that remarkable feat of arms. I hope, however, that your readers were the first to receive from me by telegraph a brief account of the great event. Five days have I now been wandering through the narrow streets of this conquered stronghold, without being able to find a suitable resting-place, for the military authorities have laid hold of every empty habitable room for the use of the members of the staff, the commissariat, the ambulance, and other services. At length I am indebted to the kindness of one of the German doctors in the Turkish service for a corner in his primitive lodgings.

I telegraphed to you that an escalade was imminent, and indeed it had been fixed for the 13th inst., but as foul weather set in, the enterprise was postponed. In the hope of deceiving the numerous spies who had never ceased to sneak through our camps, and had always managed to inform the enemy of our movements, strict secrecy was kept with regard to the day and the military dispositions, and the rumour was intentionally spread that the scheme had been abandoned. The precaution was pushed so far that although enough had transpired to make me fully aware of impending contingencies, a formal denial was given by the staff officers to my questions to them on the subject. My censor, a baron of the realm, assured me upon his word that nothing whatever was likely to take place. Two hours later the staffs of the Grand Duke and General Loris Melikoff left the camp and rode to the front. The former observed the action as well as he might at the distance of about six miles, while the latter

right wing, and attacked the Hafiz Pacha Fort crowning a steep rocky height. General Count Grabbe with a regiment of Moscow Grenadiers and a regiment of the 39th Division, assailed in the centre the Khanlı Tabia, Suvarrı Tabia, the Towers, and the Citadel, while the Ardahan brigade and another regiment of Moscow Grenadiers, under Generals Roop and Komroff, assailed positions further to the left at half past eight o'clock yesterday evening.

The engagement began in the centre. The chivalrous Count Grabbe led the foremost of his brigade in storming Khanlı Tabia, and fell dead pierced by a bullet. Captain Kwadnicki, of the 39th Regiment, jumped first on the rather too short ladder, and entered the terrible redoubt at 11. His sword was clean cut out of his hand, and his clothes pierced. Hoane a large massive redoubt, surrendered early in the morning, then the three towers. The Citadel and Fort Suvarrı were carried at the same time as Khanlı Fort. Hafiz Pacha Fort was taken, and in the morning Karadagh. The other forts especially Tekmash and Arab Tabia resisted till eight this morning then 40 battalions fled towards Erzeroum but were overtaken by dragoons and the Orenburg Cossacks and laid down their arms and were brought back as prisoners. The whole fortress and city, with 300 cannons stores, ammunition hard cash &c fell almost intact into our hands. The Turks lost 5 000 killed and wounded and 10,000 prisoners, and many flags. The Russian loss was about 2 700. The soldiers made but a trifling booty, and spared peaceful citizens women, and children. This I state as an eye witness.

General Loris Melikoff directed the battle throughout. The Grand Duke was present also. The former entered the town at 11 o'clock A.M. to day.

△ VFRAN KALPH, *November 20th Evening*—Yesterday the Grand Duke Michael made his solemn entry into Kars, and received the homage of the inhabitants. He then proceeded to the citadel, where he entertained his officers at breakfast. Afterwards he visited Forts Hafiz and Khanlı. The Grand Duke thanked the troops in the name of the Emperor, passing in review several battalions, and the artillery paraded before the conquered fortifications.

It is ascertained now that the garrison was above 20,000 strong, Only 18,000 Russians were employed in the attack. The town is full of Turkish sick and wounded, in a filthy and neglected condition. Medical assistance is sadly wanted. Typhoid fever is spreading. The cold is intense.

centre. The fort Hafys Pacha, Kanly, and Souvary defend there the entrance of the city. They are connected with each other by a system of lunettes and entrenched lines. Special protection is afforded to the town and to these works by the lofty Citadel of solid masonry piled on an almost perpendicular crag, frowning over the Kars River, which washes its base and encompasses it on three sides. Here the Turks had stored numerous new cannons and firearms, clothes, accoutrements, and an enormous quantity of provisions. This vast edifice, composed of bastions, walls, towers, and covered galleries, was constructed shortly after the Crimean War. From its threatening battlements some fifty luckless individuals, Christians and Mussulmans, were not long since hurled into the abyss below, for alleged high treason during the blockade. Others were hung summarily on mere suspicion.

With reference to the forts and redoubts I cannot forbear to add, in contradiction to the statements of some tourists and professional military men, that the works in general, and especially those designed to protect the city from the side of the plain, were by no means adequate to the requirements of modern warfare. They were, in the first place, situated far too near the outskirts, and were therefore unable to prevent the town from being bombarded. The shells flew right across it, and endangered even the powder magazine visible on the slopes behind. Moreover, the particular technical arrangement of each separate fort reveals anything but the genius of a Vauban. These works had on their most vital parts neither ditches nor mured escarps, and the ramparts were formed there of mere turf sods and nothing else. The main default was, however, the utter absence of any kind of flank defence, in the shape of caponnières, which would have rendered an escalade impossible. Once under the ramparts, the assailants were no longer exposed to the firing, and were enabled to reach the crown of the breastworks in comparative security. Arrived there they had to fight the defenders again, but, being covered themselves, they fought on equal terms. Enormous sums have been expended by the Porte on Kars, but in vain. Hafys Pacha Tabia possessed, it is true, some bomb-proof vaults and a central redoubt which served as barracks for the garrison, but not having been sunk deep enough it was, previously to the attack, utterly destroyed by the Russian shells, and afforded consequently neither shelter nor assistance at the critical moment. The Kanly Tabia, a large redan, was shut up at its gorge by a solid edifice, which, in the course of the attack, proved to be so serious an obstacle

accordance with the opinion I had formed for myself, had a successful issue or the contrary. I walked about an hour in the direction of Kars, and at eight o'clock reached the summit of the foremost peak belonging to the group of isolated porphyry hills which enclosed our now deserted headquarters near Verankoi. The cold was intense and penetrating. A light breeze blowing from the east chilled my blood, but I did not heed it in my eagerness to watch the great drama which was on the point of being performed. The full moon shone from the dark blue sky. The plain, the lower hills and valleys, seemed to slumber peacefully in the dark, but above them loomed the snow-wrapped mountain ridges glimmering in the beams of the moon. The deep boom of the heavy guns, which for some weeks had interrupted the general silence at night, had ceased for a while to remind the inhabitants of the presence of the enemy, who now crept stealthily up to them like a lion towards his prey. They were far from supposing that the ominous silence was the preamble of a sanguinary calamity which was destined to befall their city before the dawn of day. Although numerous spies had gone to and fro they could only give contradictory information, in accordance with the contradictory rumours spread deliberately by our crafty staff. It is astonishing how well the Russian strategists have learnt the arts of superior warfare within the last three months.

The Turkish authorities inside were in a high state of irritation, on account of the annoying uncertainty in which they were kept with regard to their adversaries' plans, and began to accuse their own officers of high treason. The very morning before the assault the commander ordered a lieutenant to be hanged summarily on that indictment because he had pronounced himself in favour of surrender in one of the coffee-houses. It is said, and is probable too, that a few hundred roubles had been found in his pockets. Might he not have stolen the money from some Russian officer or merchant? His death was soon to be avenged. I had hardly strained my eyesight for a few minutes, in order to distinguish the doomed city, hid in the dark bosom of the rocks, when the sudden flash of a cannon burst out as a signal in the centre of the Russian lines, and broke the lingering calm. Then more flashes followed in rapid succession before forts Hafys Pacha, Kanly, and Souvary, and some seconds later detonation after detonation were heard. Again a few minutes elapsed. Then a swift reply flashed and thundered from all the detached works and the citadel. The forts and field-guns in the trenches between them vomited fire and iron, and sent a profusion of loud bursting shells, shrapnels, and rockets into the dark

that the Russians, held in check by the continuous deadly fire poured from its embrasures, loopholes, and windows, thought for a moment of abandoning the fort. Thus partial, or rather momentary, discomfiture was due to their want of experience. In such an event the best plan is evidently to break through the covering on the top, and throw into the opening as many bombs as may be necessary for insuring the surrender of an obstinate garrison.

The decisive assault was fixed for the night of the 17th. I had no intimation except that which careful observation afforded, of the fact that an attack was on the point of being attempted, but an unusual moving of army vehicles attracted my attention. I accosted my imperturbable censor who sat musing on a rock above my tent. His thoughts were, perhaps, now wandering to his beloved wife and children, and then fixed in fascinated immobility on the white enamel of the Cross of St. George with its black and yellow ribbon, the dream and glory of every Russian officer. "Baron," I said, "I have grounds for supposing that we are going to storm Kars to night. Many tokens point to that probability." "Oh," he replied, "you always have such queer ideas, we don't think of knocking our heads against those impregnable rocks." "But," I ventured to object, "I know that a Council of War was held yesterday, which in principle pronounced for the assault. I observed, moreover, this morning, a movement of troops and army carriages which speaks in favour of my opinion." "Don't you believe it," he retorted, yawning, "our councils are in the habit of doing the contrary of that which they resolve, lest they might be betrayed before the time for action. To my knowledge nothing will occur. At all events you may depend on my giving you full information as soon as anything is likely to be carried out." An hour afterwards the truthful censor left with the staff and General Boris Melnikoff, who took a position somewhere in the centre, with the view of directing the operations, so far as this was practicable during that night, though beyond a distance of 500 yards little more could be made out by the eye than the sparkling of the rifle firing and the bright broad flash of the cannons and their bursting projectiles.

The battle was necessarily much more the work of the subaltern officers and privates than of the generals—a fact which was the best pledge for a prompt victory, if victory were possible at all. Of course, the enemy was likely to be driven over his own parapets without my knowing anything about it, nevertheless, it would have been interesting to ascertain whether the project of a nocturnal attack, which was so much in

men there. It is true that the eagerness of the soldiers to get at the enemy thwarted in some instances the original scheme ; but on the whole the programme was faithfully and well carried out. The Turks were, curiously enough, of a widely different opinion. They seem to have held fast to the strange idea that the Tchhorak Tepe fortifications would become the principal object of the enemy's attack ; whether because the valiant Kamaroff, the conqueror of Ardahan, stood in its vicinity with his old solid troops, or for some mysterious yet unrevealed grounds ; in short, they had massed there the bulk of their forces, some thirty battalions. The impregnable Citadel, on the contrary, had no infantry garrison at all, and was merely defended by a company of artillerymen. The not less inaccessible Karadagh was likewise only manned by a few feeble battalions of demoralized and disaffected Shia-Arabs from Mesopotamia and Irak. These foolish arrangements are worth investigation in order to ascertain why the commanding Pacha and his councillors ordered so strange a disposition of their forces, which numbered well nigh 20,000 combatants, for such a garrison should be fully equal to the task of defending a fortress like Kars, even against twice that number of the best soldiers in the world. The Russian Division brought to bear on the five forts of the Tchhorak Tepe was composed of the 1st Brigade of Moscow Grenadiers and the Ardahan Brigade, constituting a force of fourteen battalions, commanded, as I have already stated, by General Roop. It must, however, be remembered that the above enumerated forty-two battalions were not all engaged in the escalade, but that about one-third of them formed the reserves. One hundred and forty-four field-pieces and fifty-two position guns seconded the movements, so far as this was possible. I am assured that their practice was excellent, notwithstanding the uncertain light of the moon. They were directed in their aim by the enemy's fire.

The first outwork scaled, by placing ladders against the steep parapets, was the Hafys Pacha Tabia, the massive redoubt of which had been previously destroyed during the bombardment. The Arab troops posted there left the ramparts, the turrets, and the intervening trenches in headlong flight, abandoning the field-pieces which were placed in them. At the same time the 2nd Brigade of Moscow Grenadiers assailed the Souvary and the Kanly Tabias. The former, an ordinary redoubt, was soon carried ; but the latter, a very strong fort, was tenaciously defended, and occasioned the loss of many gallant officers and men. Major-General Count Grabbe, a zealous and distinguished soldier, the father of four children,

plain where invisible columns of Russian infantry steadily moved onward. Shortly afterwards the action was proceeding with relentless fury. In the meantime the commanding Pacha sat at his dinner table and enjoyed his meal with epicurean placidity. He received the report of an aide-de camp, who, as a perfect Turkish courtier, disliked to disturb his superior's good-sant news, and to the cannonade.

A magnificent demonstration, but they were by that time already baffled and in full retreat. Thereupon the Pacha continued to enjoy his dinner, and afterwards his pipe and coffee. Only when the roar of the battle was ever increasing, and rose finally to vehemence, did he shake off his optimism. The Russians, obedient to the instructions they had received not to betray their position by inopportune firing advanced in silence in nowise daunted by the shower of shells, shrapnels, and bullets which whirled through the air above them, but which could only be aimed at random, owing to the insufficient light of the hazy moon.

On the Russian right wing operated the 40th Division, sixteen battalions strong, directing their columns against the Hafys Pacha the Karadagh, and the Arab Tabrys. In the centre, designed to storm the Kanly and Souvary Tabrys, the city and its towering Citadel, were the 2nd Brigade of the Moscow Grenadiers, the Sebastopol Regiment of the 19th Division, two battalions of Caucasian riflemen, and two of sappers, together, if I am not mistaken, fourteen battalions. These combined forces were placed under the command of the energetic and intelligent Lieutenant-General Lazareff. They had to perform the most serious part of the attack, and were directed to carry the aforesaid works at any cost. Separated from them, beyond the left bank of the Kars river, to the north of the rocky steeps of the Tcholak Tepe, another division, under Lieutenant General Roop, was stationed. Its task consisted principally in making a resolute demonstration on the western and northern sides of that hill, defended by five strong forts which efficiently cover each other, but are, on the other hand, in the awkward position of being almost of no avail, in case the Karadagh forts and the city should be taken. There is no water at hand on those rocks, and the defenders are dependent on the depots and magazines in Kars and the Citadel for the necessary supply of provisions and ammunition. In the face of this fact it must be considered as a wise arrangement on the part of the Russians not to sacrifice, by a reckless assault, an unlimited number of gallant

matter, and thought it best to open negotiations, upon which he surrendered on the condition, which was readily granted, that his and his soldiers' lives should be spared.

In the meantime, at half-past ten o'clock, the troops who had been victorious on that part of the line of battle entered the town, and drove the despairing Turks from street to street and shelter to shelter towards the Tehorak Tepe and the Citadel. The frightened inhabitants on their part had either hid themselves in their stone hovels and cellars, or taken refuge in the Armenian quarter, situated at the back part of the town and up hill. A German doctor had the pleasure of sheltering and protecting some fifty Turkish women and children in his small lodgings. Deadly fear prevailed among all the worshippers of the Arabian Prophet, for they knew they had insulted and murdered nearly all the Russian wounded and such prisoners as had the misfortune to fall into their barbarous hands. They expected nothing less than death. Even Russian officers expressed the fear that their excited soldiers might, in the case of complete success, put aside all feelings of humanity and spare no living soul. But, contrary to expectation, the jovial, good-natured fellows, with genuine religious feeling, refrained from taking revenge on their fanatical foes, and behaved as Christian men. Not a single civilian was slain, or even insulted, and not a woman had to complain of insult. I wonder how many other soldiers of Europe would have so leniently dealt with the inhabitants of a stormed fortress, stained with the blood of hundreds of defencelessly slaughtered comrades? Many windows were, it is true, pierced by bullets: but behind them no one was killed, save such Turkish soldiers as were obstinate enough to withstand to the last. I saw a loophole of a minaret riddled with shots all around like a target, where some fanatical imaum, perhaps, had insidiously fired his rifle on the passing Russians, and had thus finally attracted their attention.

Slowly the columns advanced on the Citadel, and arrived at the foot of the zigzag road which runs to its summit. The narrow causeway was thickly crowded with fugitive Mohammedans, men, women and children, who all strove to enter the precincts of the stronghold, when the gleam of Russian bayonets appeared in their rear. Thus the gunners on the ramparts had only the option of massacring their own kinsmen or of giving up. They adopted the second alternative and surrendered. Thus this strong pile of masonry, containing the arsenal and depots of costly Peabody-Martini and Winchester breechloaders, many Krupp cannon, together

led his column on horseback on the Kanly Tabia. At about eleven o'clock, however, two bullets simultaneously pierced his breast and terminated his gallant career. He expired before reaching the ambulance. Only a few weeks ago he had been decorated with the cross of St. George for his valorous behaviour at the storming of Ardahan. I met him some days before the battle, and he showed me then two other such crosses which he had received by the same post from his wife and his sister as a congratulatory present. "You see," he said smiling in a melancholy way, "I am well provided should I perchance lose my cross." I observed him often kneeling before his field bed absorbed in prayer and meditation, with his head buried in the cushions. Colonel Blumering of the Sappers, then assumed the command of the brigade, and with iron grasp, seized the formidable redan. He and the pony he is accustomed to ride seem to be shot-proof, as on several occasions, especially at Ardahan, they remained for hours unscathed in a hailstorm of bullets. The earthworks of the Kanly Tabia were taken by escalade, and the garrison was driven out by the bayonet. Captain Kwidnitzky, of the Sebastopol Regiment, was the first on the ladder and on the crown of the rampart. The handle of his sword was shot away, and his clothes were torn to rags by bullets and bayonets. He showed me the ladder which he had climbed, still leaning against the wall. I found it to be about three yards too short, an awkward circumstance, which might have led to failure had it not been for the demoralized state of the defenders. Some of them, however, animated by an energetic Pacha, had shut themselves up in the long massive redoubt at the gorge, and thence kept up a murderous rifle firing till four o'clock in the morning. The young Russian troops already thought of abandoning their conquest, on account of the rapid volleys fired from the loop holes, which dealt very badly with them. They sent word to that effect to General Loris Melikoff, asking for reinforcements, or for leave to retreat. The Commander in Chief, having no reserves at hand, ordered two sotnias of Cossacks to dismount, and to assist the wavering infantry. The riders followed the summons with loud cheers, and backed the Grenadiers so efficaciously that they regained their exhausted courage, and braved anew the enemy's fire as steadily as the old Caucasian soldiers. General Gubsky, the gallant and able chief of the artillery, a man of modesty and spotless character, managed to finish the sanguinary struggle by the threat of blowing the whole redoubt up with dynamite. As in all probability this ingenious scheme would have been carried into execution, the Pacha inside reflected on the

sheltered behind their ramparts. From my porphyry peak I could only make out there, during the whole night, the incessant flash of the cannon, and the undiminished sparkling fire of the breechloaders. At midnight, however, the firing ceased suddenly on the Tchakmak (Tokmak) Tabia, and a few minutes later three rockets rose into the air and burst with a red light, as a signal announcing the capture of that large and well-constructed fort. The remaining four, however, successfully repelled the repeated attempts to storm them, which were made in spite of instructions. There blood was unnecessarily spilt. When the Commander of the whole fortress, who was present on those hills, became at daybreak aware that the forts in the plain, the town, the Citadel, and the Karadagh were silenced, and saw the victorious Russian colours flying from their battlements, his heart sank and he lost his head. It was impossible to procure water and provisions for his remaining troops, and his ammunition had run short. It was then he came to the decision to avail himself of a gap which the Russians had left open expressly for that purpose, in their investing lines, and evacuating the forts and other positions, he tried to make good his escape towards Batoum, with the remnants of his forty battalions and his cavalry. Instead of remaining with the rear, as was his duty, he consulted only the interest of his personal safety, and was among the foremost fugitives. Thanks to his fleet Arab steed, he succeeded in crossing the snow-covered mountains which border the Kars plain to the westward, with some 150 well-mounted followers, and escaped.

Thoroughly stiffened by the cold, which during the same night killed eleven prisoners, I returned to our camp at a quick pace, and ordered my servant to saddle the horses, after having indulged in a glass of brandy and some cakes, while the battle was still going on around the Tchhoraklou Tepe fortifications. Then I rode at full speed towards Kars. I at once saw the Turkish columns fleeing towards the opposite snow-capped mountains. Their endeavour to escape in that direction proved vain. From all sides numerous Russian cavalry regiments, accompanied by horse-artillery, galloped onward, with the view of cutting off their retreat. The Nishninovgorod and the Sever Dragoons, with the Orenburg and other Cossacks, were quick on their heels, and, overtaking them, summoned them to surrender. The Turks, under the apprehension of being cut down, refused; but when the Horse Artillery began to play on them with shrapnel, they took a more reasonable view of the case, and laying down their arms, gave themselves up to General Prince Tcherbasoff,

with an enormous amount of ammunition provisions and other military stores fell without a serious blow, into the hands of the victorious Russians. In looking from my window at that almost perpendicular crag frowning some 150 yards high over the Kars River crowned with a series of solid fortifications I am astonished, and I am at a loss to understand, how it could have been so easily conquered and why it was not more valiantly defended. I am sure that a single battalion of first class soldiers might have kept it for months in the teeth of the most powerful army. At the time of its inglorious fall some battalions of the 40th Division had climbed the not less rocky sides of the Karadagh Hill and took after a short but sharp struggle at the point of the bayonet the massive castle like fort on its top. Its partner the Arab Tabia of almost without who the accustomed food and by disease, unlike their Syrian brethren in Bulgaria withstood only for a few minutes the determined onslaught of the sturdy Russians and then either took to headlong flight or laid down their arms. One must have seen the Kara high position in order to form an exact idea of its very formidable natural and artificial strength. Like the Citadel it is surrounded on two sides by the abyss of the Kars river and falls off towards the southern plain in superposed lava blocks presenting the aspect of a Cyclopean wall. With the conquest of these essential points which beyond doubt are not only the strongest around Kars but are perhaps not surpassed in defensive power by any fortifications in the world the remainder of the forts had become virtually untenable and the partly successful resistance of four of the five outworks situated on the Tcholak Tepo was of no practical avail. There the Ardahan brigade and the 1st Moscow Grenadiers had to meet and keep at bay the Turkish main force. The Russians were received there by a tremendous fire of cannon and musketry which it was difficult to meet. Their instructions however, did not permit them to storm these works but only to content themselves with an energetic bombardment. The city and the to an extent even beyond the original expectation though it was accompanied by severe losses to the aggressors. The Russian soldiers finding themselves out of control in the darkness advanced audaciously to the very margin of the ditches and kept up a sharp skirmishing engagement with the Turks.

Don't you advance! The Turks will attack you." I did not understand at first what he meant, but felt uneasy on seeing the soldiers slide behind the rocks, preparing and levelling their rifles. This induced me to stand aside so far as the perpendicular borders of the ravine permitted. I could not but believe that a quarter of the town was still in possession of desperate fighting Turks, ready to make a sortie; but no report of fire-arms argued in favour of this supposition. At last the mystery was disclosed. Some fifty well-armed horsemen, recognizable as Turks by their pink fezzes, dashed with clanging hoofs over the bridge, fast pursued by a squad of Cossacks. The situation became rather critical for me, as I was crammed in between the barbarous riders and the Russian soldiers. It was evident that the Mussulmans, relying on the excellence of their horses, had the intention of breaking out on this side, and riding for life and liberty through the stragglers. Luckily for them and me, however, when they had crossed the bridge and found themselves engaged in the ravine through which the road runs with some twenty breech-loaders pointed at them, they halted and deliberated, obviously uncertain as to their further steps. Time pressing, they thought prudence the better part of valour, and surrendered to the Cossacks. As they had wounded and killed some Russians, shooting behind them after the Parthian fashion, in their precipitous flight, they were not too tenderly handled. The Cossacks pulled them off their horses, and stripped them in a twinkling of all they possessed, appropriating their animals. Had a broker been present he might have concluded excellent bargains. I refused an army revolver which a Cossack tendered to me as a token of his special esteem. This little adventure warned me not to enter the town on this side, and therefore I rode round to the principal entrance. Previously, however, I had the fancy to visit the Kanly Tabia which was not far out of my way. There Captain Kwidnitzki showed me obligingly the manner in which the escalade had been effected. I entered into the massive redoubt which had served as barracks and hospital for the garrison. Now its vast rooms were crowded with Turkish wounded, chiefly Arabs, who piteously called for medical assistance. This was unluckily out of the question by that time, because the Russian surgeons had enough to do with their own people, while the foreigners in the Turkish service did not dare to leave their houses for fear of being insulted, and stripped in the very streets. Besides, drugs, bandages, and other surgical appurtenances, had been wantonly wasted by plundering Russian soldiers, or had been put aside

the commander of that cavalry brigade. It was said in camp that this gallant trooper had been killed during the night, but this was happily untrue. I had the pleasure of meeting him in full health on the same day, and was glad to see him display his accustomed joyous humour. Another prince—heaven and the Emperor know there is no lack of princes in the Caucasian provinces—whose somewhat queer name I don't remember, a colonel of a Cossack regiment, pursued the Turkish cavalry sharply, and crossed swords with it. He was slightly wounded in his right hand, but the enemy was cut down to the last man. The Turkish pony cannot race with the Russian light cavalry horse, though the genuine Arab coursers have proved to be more than a match for him. I suppose that the reception which the Turkish commander of Kars is likely to meet with in Constantinople will hardly be a flattering one. At all events he deserves, partly for his cruelties, partly for the miserable defence of so strong, well provided, and well garrisoned a fortress, to be hanged on the highest gallows which Turkey can erect. That attempts to bribe somebody were made, and had a chance of being brought to the desired end, I positively know, but whether the goodwill of an important traitor was really secured, and if so, whether he was able to fulfil his promise, I cannot tell. Further, I am quite in the dark with regard to the individual who may have entered into the black bargain. The European doctors here account for the disaster which so suddenly befell the Turks, by stating that the troops, especially the Arabs and Kurds, were in a despondent state of mind, badly clad and fed, and never paid, and had moreover a dislike to fighting the battles of their Sunnite masters. Yet these very worthies whose disposition could be no secret for the commander and his council, had been appointed and left in insufficient numbers to defend the most important and the most vulnerable points of the fortress.

I arrived at Kars just when the occupation of all its outworks by the Russians had been effected. The Turkish dead lay by scores in and behind the trenches, wherever I looked, all frozen stiff in the attitude in which they had expired. Hundreds of large wild dogs gnawed the bones of the numerous dead horses, whose skins, however, had been previously flayed by some hardy speculator. I then entered a broad ravine, likewise strewn with corpses, and wheeled my horse towards a wooden bridge over the Kars River, together with some stray soldiers who went to visit the conquered city for the sake of plunder or curiosity. Suddenly a gendarme rode up in wild haste, shouting and gesticulating, "Take care!"

the situation, they broke only into houses where they had almost the certainty of extorting hard cash and jewellery. In their greed they showed a singular impartiality with regard to their victims, inasmuch as they robbed the Christians quite in the same style as the genuine Moslem. Whosoever had a full purse in his pocket passed as their natural enemy, and was violently deprived of its contents. During the first two days it was impossible to put a stop to depredations, but then order was vigorously restored. Many of these infamous marauders were arrested, and compelled to give up their plunder. Patrols of Cossacks paraded the streets day and night, and searched every suspicious-looking individual wearing the beehive fur cap. An old man decorated with two immense medals, one of gold and the other of silver, dedicated, perhaps, to Apollo, and Diana, or some other pagan saints, ran after a young Armenian militiaman, accusing him of having stolen his gold watch. Immediately the Cossacks seized the delinquent, and, searching him, extracted the missing precious object from his fur cap, and returned it to the excited owner, an antiquated Russian consular official.

As the Armenians, with few exceptions, are on the whole not an energetic race, the Russian Governor, General Papko, had no choice left but to enlist in the police force an adequate number of Turkish volunteers, former zaptiehs and others, who, being well and regularly paid—thirty roubles a month—exercise their accustomed sway over the overawed population with zeal and fidelity. Should the Christian races in Turkey, whether Slavs, Greeks, or Armenians, not be allowed to take a prominent part in the administration of the country, the Turks themselves, if treated on equitable terms, and not marred by interference with their religious superstitions, will loyally submit to any European government. They are loth to obey their own sluggish Byzantine rulers, and are prepared to accept any other state of things that may prove to be better, and afford them a fairer chance of enjoying the fruits of their labours. Hitherto they have had no notion of a more orderly rule existing in the world. False statements spread by their cunning tyrants induced them to believe that Europeans in general, and Russians in particular, would persecute and ill-treat them because of their religious creed, and assign them a humiliating position, similar to that which they have inflicted upon their Christian subjects. The latter would no doubt have been entitled, with the Turks, to far more consideration, were it not for their cowardice and untrustworthy character, which could not but

by careful Turkish officials for their own benefit. So the doctors were unable to perform their duty, and the sick suffered for days without attendance.

Sick of the ghastly sight of hundreds of dead, expiring and helpless men, tortured by cruel wounds, and stunned by the cold, I left the Kanly Fort and returned to the town. Kars has no enceinte, evidently an incredible neglect on the part of the military engineers who have spent the Sultan's treasures or the European loans, on its rocky heights only. At the outskirts, before the entrance of their principal street—a narrow lane about five yards wide—a crowd of old and young Turks had assembled, waiting for the commanding general Louis Melikoff, who had not made his appearance yet. They seemed to be rather uneasy, as the plundering was fast going on. A drowning man grasps at a straw. Although I had no army or retinue behind me, they admired, perhaps, my badge as a Correspondent thought it perchance the grand cross of some order in honour of the most distinguished of the innumerable Russian saints, and insisted on my accepting their offer of bread and salt, imploring mercy for their persons and property. At that moment a gang of Armenian militiamen rode into the town. An insolent looking lad, their leader, addressed the bearded Turks with the air of Hannibal entering Siguntum, and said, "Now, you Turkish scoundrels, I have come to settle with you. Now you shall feel that we are your masters." My presence evidently kept him from striking the Mussulmans. Had I ever had an opportunity of seeing that hero and his like only within a cannon shot's range near the enemy, I would have pardoned him his arrogance, but considering that the petulant boy was, perhaps a few months ago, a noways honourable member of a Turkish bathing establishment, I could not but feel disgusted. Having been informed that General Louis Melikoff's arrival was imminent, I waited a little longer in the same place, and amused myself with observing the Russian soldiers, who came out of the city heavily loaded with sundry booty. It is true that the goods which they had pilfered were not of a very valuable description, and had been evidently taken with the view of mitigating the hardships of camp life in their thin, cold, uncomfortable tents, but, on the other hand, they belonged to the necessities of the poorer class of the population. Blankets, rugs, old carpets, kettles, shoes, articles hardly worth one's while to carry away, had been abstracted by the soldiers. The Tartars, Armenians, and Circassians, reaped the fruits of the Russian victory with far more circumspection. Guided by some refugee well acquainted with

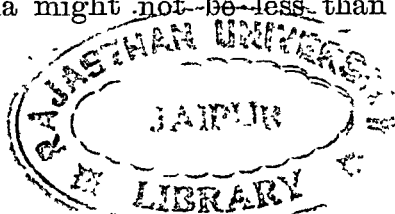
bad season which is likely to prove for the Russians a more dangerous adversary than the armed rabble of the Ghazi.

The Russian trophies in Kars are beyond expectation. 312 cannons, among them 42 field-pieces, whole depots of rifles and revolvers, large quantities of ammunition, stores and provisions, and about 16,000 prisoners fell into the hands of the conquerors. The remainder of the garrison must be considered as killed, or as having deserted. The Russians shut their eyes to Turkish desertions, as they find it very troublesome and costly to transport their countless prisoners in this season into the interior of their ice-shackled country. Whosoever manages to procure for himself a suit of plain clothes may run away and make himself comfortable in one of the villages, or in his own homestead. Voluntarily these men will not again join Mukhtar Pacha's hungry and neglected host. The Russian losses, it seems, do not exceed 2,000 men, and are at all events less than had been originally supposed.

The staff and different officers, including those of the telegraph and post, are now comfortably installed here. The town is quiet, and its Turkish inhabitants, ruled by a police force of their own countrymen, submit to their new form of government without complaining. Some fanatics may mutter harmless prayers addressed to Allah and his Prophet for the restoration of the old rule, but the bulk of the population is quiet, and even satisfied.

The renewal of hostilities, on a large scale at least, is not likely. The weather is very severe. It is freezing and snowing fast just now, and the plain around has for the first time a chance of being wrapped in its customary white winter covering.

Thus fell the great Ottoman stronghold in Asia. The event made a deep impression upon Europe. It raised the military capacity of the Russians, and at the same time exposed the want of resources of the Turks. In the army before Plevna it was hailed with great rejoicings, for it excited the hope that after so many months of reverses and hardships the good fortune of the western army of Bulgaria might not be less than that of the Army of the Caucasus.



excite the contempt of a warlike race. Now the Russians though far from being paragons of civilization, show by the equity and leniency how false have been the allegations published by the Stamboul officials and newspapers.

After having waited for a quarter of an hour at the entrance of the town, I saw at last a numerous cavalcade advancing towards it. Thereupon the Turkish notabilities, on horse back and on foot, went to meet it in order to present their homage to the Commander-in-Chief. An interview followed with the object of exchanging assurances of good faith and obedience, and the promise of administering strict justice and maintaining strict discipline and order. The commanding general had dismounted, and on seeing me from afar called for me. Full of joy and good temper, he shook hands with me of congratulating him upon so On my remarking that General 'rimean War, in an unsuccessful attempt to storm Kars when it was much less fortified than it is now, lost 7,000 men, he corrected me stating, "I was present; we lost more than 8,000 killed or disabled." A few minutes later General Loris Melikoff entered the conquered city, in his modest manner, as the precursor of the Grand Duke Michael. The town still swarmed with lawless or hostile individuals. The Imperial Prince held his triumphant entrance there only on the following day. The commanding general and his retinue proceeded through the winding, narrow, dirty lanes of Kars to the house of one of the Turkish notabilities, where he accepted for about half an hour the man's hospitality, as a token that all hostile feelings had ceased, and that the inhabitants were entitled to his powerful protection. This ceremony of Eastern sarcasm was soon gone through, whereupon the general and his staff returned immediately to the Vera Datch Camp without having previously visited other parts of the town or its Citadel. On the road a Russian General Prince Tchaikowskiz was met, who was one of the forty officers the

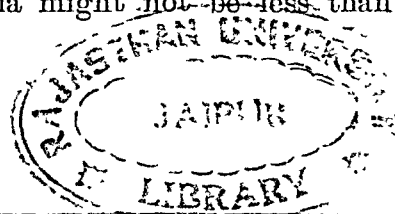
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After having waited for a quarter of an hour at the entrance of the town, I saw at last a numerous cavalcade advancing towards it. Thereupon the Turkish notabilities, on horse back and on foot, went to meet it in order to present their homage to the Commander in Chief. An interview followed, with the object of exchanging assurances of good faith and obedience, and the promise of administering strict justice, and maintaining strict discipline and order. The commanding general had dismounted, and on seeing me from afar called for me. Full of joy and good temper, he shook hands with me, and I seized the opportunity of congratulating him upon so brilliant and lasting a victory. On my remarking that General Mouravieff had during the Crimean War, in an unsuccessful attempt to storm Kars when it was much less fortified than it is now, lost 7,000 men, he corrected me, stating, "I was present, we lost more than 8,000 killed or disabled." A few minutes later General Loris Melikoff entered the conquered city, in his modest manner, as the precursor of the Grand Duke Michael. The town still swarmed with lawless or hostile individuals. The Imperial Prince held his triumphant entrance there only on the following day. The commanding general and his retinue proceeded through the winding, narrow, dirty lanes of Kars to the house of one of the Turkish notabilities, where he accepted for about half an hour the man's hospitality, as a token that all hostile feelings had ceased, and that the inhabitants were entitled to his powerful protection. This ceremony of Eastern sanctity was soon gone through, whereupon the general and his staff returned immediately to the Veran Kaleh Camp, without having previously visited other parts of the town or its citadel. On the road a report from General Prince Tchadchevadze reached us, announcing the wholesale surrender of the forty battalions which had tried to escape across the mountains, but were arrested by the Russian cavalry. The officers hailed this important news with repeated cheers. Thus, the victory had been brought to a very satisfactory close, and henceforward Erzeroum and Bitoum are the only points in Armenia which can hope to uphold for a while the Sultan's standard. Not the genius of Mukhtar and Dervish Pachas protects them, nor the valour of their soldiers, but solely the

bad season which is likely to prove for the Russians a more dangerous adversary than the armed rabble of the Ghazi.

The Russian trophies in Kars are beyond expectation. 312 cannons, among them 42 field-pieces, whole depots of rifles and revolvers, large quantities of ammunition, stores and provisions, and about 16,000 prisoners fell into the hands of the conquerors. The remainder of the garrison must be considered as killed, or as having deserted. The Russians shut their eyes to Turkish desertions, as they find it very troublesome and costly to transport their countless prisoners in this season into the interior of their ice-shackled country.

Whosoever manages to procure for himself a suit of plain clothes may run away and make himself comfortable in one of the villages, or in his own homestead. Voluntarily these men will not again join Mukhtar Pacha's hungry and neglected host. The Russian losses, it seems, do not exceed 2,000 men, and are at all events less than had been originally supposed.

The staff and different officers, including those of the telegraph and post, are now comfortably installed here. The town is quiet, and its Turkish inhabitants, ruled by a police force of their own countrymen, submit to their new form of government without complaining. Some fanatics may mutter harmless prayers addressed to Allah and his Prophet for the restoration of the old rule, but the bulk of the population is quiet, and even satisfied.

The renewal of hostilities, on a large scale at least, is not likely. The weather is very severe. It is freezing and snowing fast just now, and the plain around has for the first time a chance of being wrapped in its customary white winter covering.

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